# CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

FRIDAY ▸ DECEMBER 26, 2025 ▸ VOL: 11 ▸ ISSUE: 161 ▸ PAGES 8 ▸ ₹2.00

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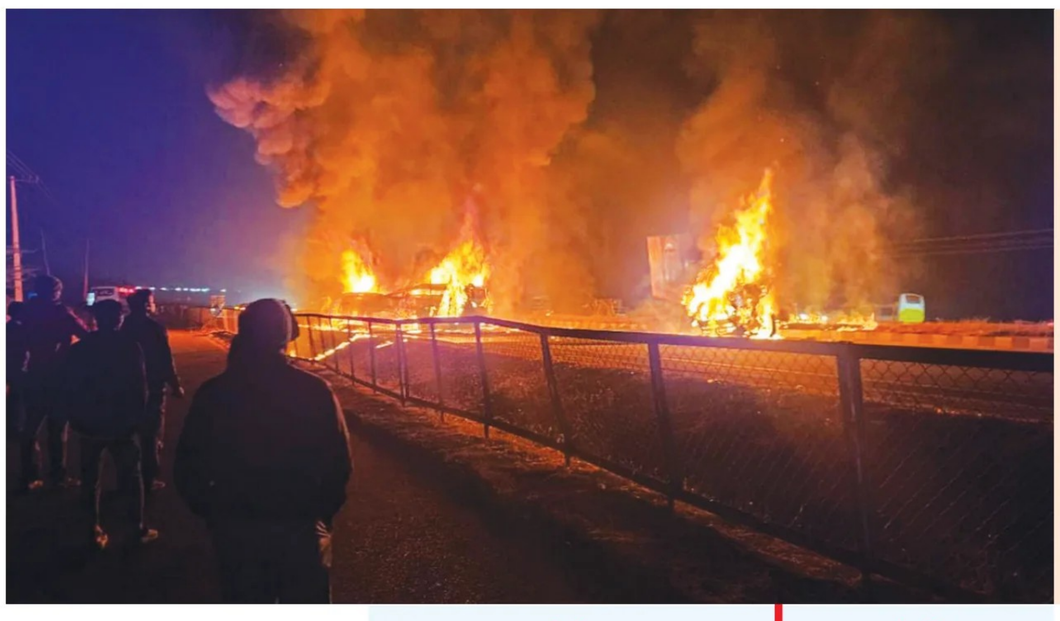
# Six charred to death after truck collides with bus on NH 48



## Bus driver recalls the incident..

The driver of the bus that met with an accident, said that he tried to control his vehicle on seeing the over speeding truck approaching from the opposite direction, but couldn't.

"The truck came from the other side of the road divider and hit. It was overspeeding. I was maintaining the speed of 60-70 (km/hr) at that time. I saw the vehicle coming from the front. I know only the vehicle (truck) hitting the bus, after that I don't know what happened and how I was brought out," Rafiq, the bus driver who is undergoing treatment.

Mohammed Sadiq, the cleaner of the bus said, "The truck that was coming from the opposite direction directly rammed the diesel tank. I was in the front of the bus and was asleep when the accident occurred. Due to the impact of the accident, I was thrown out, breaking the glass of the bus,"

**CHITRADURGA**

At least six people died after a private sleeper bus caught fire following a collision with a truck in Karnataka's Chitradurga district early Thursday morning. The bus, traveling from Bengaluru to Shivamogga on National Highway-48 (NH-48), was carrying 32 passengers, including the driver and conductor, when the accident occurred around 2:30 am.

Authorities said the truck reportedly jumped the divider from the opposite lane and struck the bus, likely hitting its fuel tank and causing it to ignite. A few passengers managed to escape, but most were trapped as flames engulfed the vehicle.

Besides that, six people are missing while 21 people are injured. Eyewitnesses described a horrific scene, with passengers screaming and struggling to break glass windows to flee. Survivors recounted the difficulty in escaping the fire, which spread rapidly.

The bus belonged to Seabird Coach, and emergency services rushed to the site to rescue survivors and clear the area. Police are investigating the incident to determine the exact cause and have appealed to drivers to exercise caution on highways.

The driver of the truck bearing the registration of Haryana-registered Canter has also died. The body of the lorry driver is in Taluk general hospital in Hiriyur. The bus driver and conductor survived.

> The news of the accident that occurred near Hiriyur between a bus and a truck travelling from Bengaluru to Gokarna, resulting in several people being burned alive, has come as a severe shock. I convey my condolences to those who have died. I pray that the injured recover soon. May such tragedies never recur.
>
> —D.K. Shivakumar, Deputy CM

> I offer my deepest condolences in this moment of grief. I pray for strength to those who have lost their loved ones. I also wish a speedy recovery to the injured.
>
> —Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress chief

### CM SIDDARAMAIAH AND PM MODI ANNOUNCE EX-GRATIA

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah expressed condolences to the victims of the tragic accident in Chitradurga and announced an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh each for the families of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for those injured in the accident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed grief over the fatalities and announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the families of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for those injured.

# BJP proud to have torn down Article 370 wall: PM Modi

**LUCKNOW**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the BJP was proud that its government got the opportunity to "tear down the wall of Article 370". Modi said this after inaugurating the Rashtra Prerna Sthal in Lucknow on the 101st birth anniversary of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Addressing a public gathering after the inauguration, Modi said, "The BJP is proud that our government had the opportunity to tear down the wall of Article 370." He added that the legacy of good governance created by the BJP-led NDA government was now being taken to new heights at both the Centre and state levels. "We must not forget how after Independence, a tendency developed to attribute every positive achievement to a single family," he said.

The prime minister said his government had made Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya's Antyodaya vision its mission to ensure that government schemes reached all the poor without discrimination.

**Modi said the remark after inaugurating the Rashtra Prerna Sthal in Lucknow on the 101st birth anniversary of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee**

"Before 2014, about 25 crore people were covered under social security schemes, while today this number has increased to 95 crore," he said. Modi also said the day was not far when Uttar Pradesh's defence corridor would be known globally for defence manufacturing.

PM Modi was accompanied by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other senior leaders.

The Rashtra Prerna Sthal, a landmark national memorial complex dedicated to the life and ideals of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee, features 65-foot-high bronze statues of Vajpayee, Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya. It also houses a state-of-the-art museum designed in a lotus-shaped structure spread over 98,000 square feet.

# Another Hindu man lynched in B'desh over alleged extortion

**DHAKA**

In a tragic incident in Rajbari district, Bangladesh, another Hindu man, Amrit Mondal, also known as Samrat, was beaten to death by villagers late Wednesday night over alleged extortion. The attack comes just days after another Hindu, Dipu Chandra Das, a 27-year-old garment worker, was lynched in Mymensingh over alleged blasphemy.

According to reports, the mob assault on Samrat occurred around 11 pm. Police, alerted to the incident, rushed to the scene and found him critically injured. He was taken to the Pangsha Upazila Health Complex, where he was declared dead around 2 am. Samrat reportedly had multiple cases registered against him, including a murder case, and was allegedly running a criminal gang involved in extortion and other illegal activities. He had reportedly been in hiding in India before recently returning to the village.

On the night of the attack, Samrat and associates went to collect money from a local resident, Shahidul Islam. When the family raised an alarm shouting "robbers," villagers gathered and assaulted Samrat. One associate, Mohammad Selim, was caught and handed over to police, who recovered two firearms from him.

The Mymensingh lynching involved Dipu Chandra Das, accused of making derogatory remarks about Prophet Muhammad. He was beaten, tied to a tree, and set on fire. His death, along with Samrat's, was condemned by Bangladesh's interim government, which vowed strict action against perpetrators.

Both attacks occurred amid heightened unrest following political activist Sharif Osman Hadi's death, which triggered nationwide protests, vandalism, and attacks on political and diplomatic sites, reflecting rising tensions in the country.

> Bangladesh belongs to Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus: Tarique Rahman's call for unity on return home.

# Mysuru balloon stand blast: One killed, several injured

**MYSURU**

One person was killed and several others, including children, seriously injured when a helium gas cylinder used to fill balloons exploded near Jaya marthanda gate of the Mysore Palace on Thursday. The injured were rushed to K R Hospital, with three to four in critical condition.

With hundreds visiting the palace for the flower show and cultural programs, the explosion reportedly happened while the cylinder was in use, injuring passersby as well.

City Police Commissioner Seema Latkar, along with her team, sealed the area and dispersed the crowd. According to the police, the balloon vendor was around 40 years old and remains unidentified. The injured have been identified as Lakshmi from Mysuru, Manjula from Nanjangud, Kotreshi from Ranebennur, Shaheen from Kolkata, and another woman from Bengaluru. They had come to the palace to view the Christmas illumination. The commissioner confirmed that the explosion was caused by a helium gas cylinder, and the cycle on which the cylinder was placed was completely destroyed.

A police case has been registered, and investigations are underway.

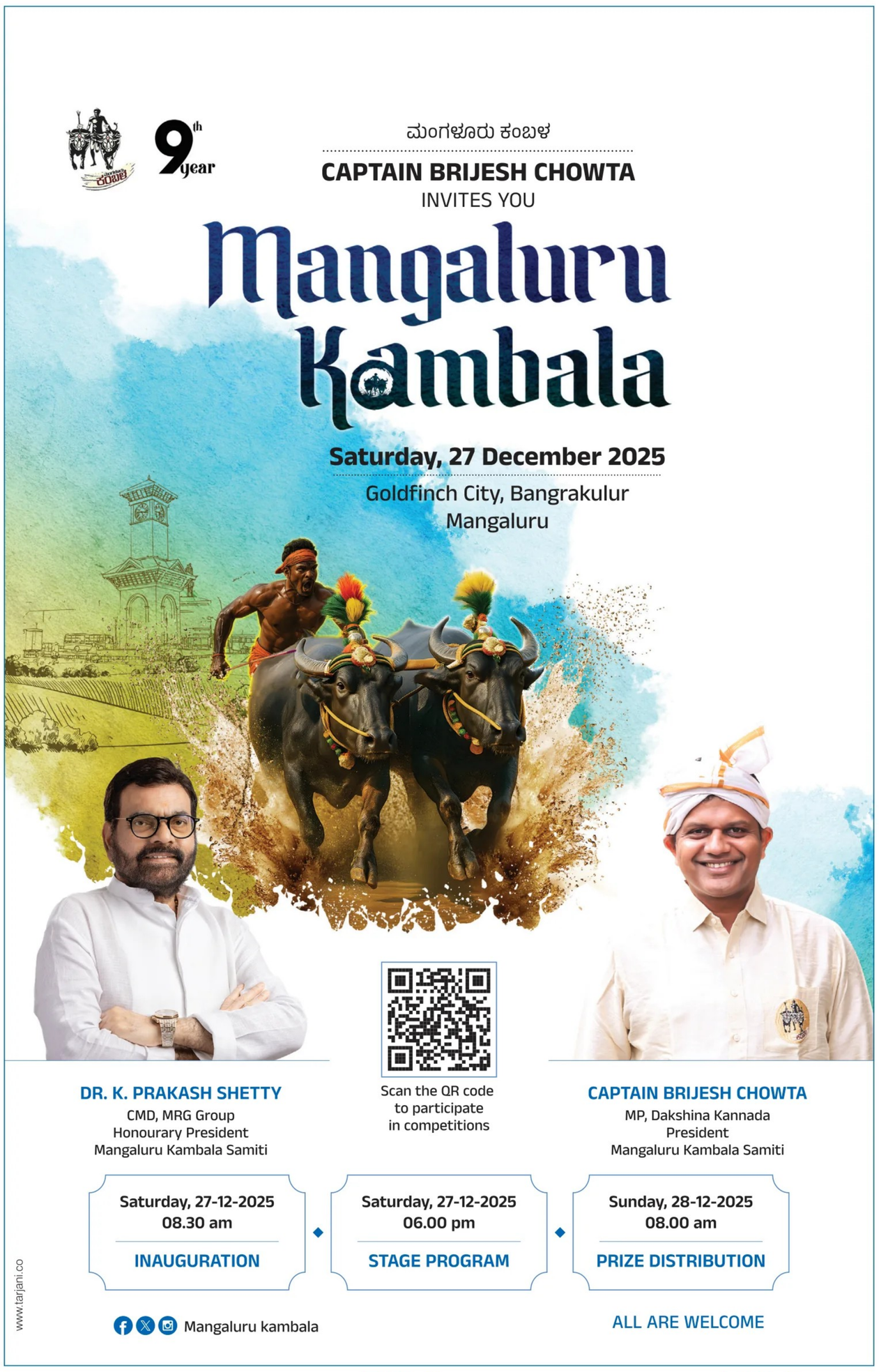
# DKS meets Kharge, leads to speculations linking it to CM change

**BENGALURU**

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Thursday met Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence, leading to speculations linking it to the ongoing power tussle in the state for the CM post.

However, speaking to reporters after the meeting, Shivakumar said he did not discuss anything political and has only shared his thoughts with the Congress president, as a state unit chief, regarding the law enacted by the centre replacing the MGNREGA, ahead of the Congress Working Committee meeting on December 27. He said he has not discussed any other issue with Kharge. "There is no need to do it, I will not do it, there is no such thing for now. Siddaramaiah and I have said that we will work abiding by the high command's decision, and we are committed to it."

Responding to a question on his statement that he will remain a party worker, Shivakumar said, what he meant was being a lifetime member of the party and serving the organisation, irrespective of the post or the position he holds. "I'm a lifetime worker of the party. Whatever the post may be, I'm a worker of the party. I have tied the party flag, both as a party worker and President. I have pasted party posters, and I have done the sweeping work. I have done all things for the Congress party. I have not come just to sit and make speeches on the stage. I have done all the work for the party," he said.

## QUICK READ

### Janapadaru Cultural Forum organized 2 day drama festival

**Bengaluru**

Janapadaru Cultural Forum has organized a two-day drama festival on December 26 and 27 at Janapadaru theatre, Nimbekayipura. On December 26 at 6.30 pm-Somiya Saubhagya Geeta written by Dr Kota Shivarama Karant and directed by Ganesh Mandarthi will be presented by Yaksha Rangayana team. On December 27 the play Gyana Degula Nammura Sarkari Shale written and directed by Siddheshwar Nanasu will be performed. On this occasion, Ka Na Srinivas, Dr Balagurumurthy, Lokesh will be present, said Katamnallur Papanna, President of Janapadaru.

### Brigade road prepares for New Year celebrations

**Bengaluru**

Bengaluru is gearing up to welcome the New Year, and Brigade Road is at the heart of the city's festivities. With just a week remaining, the iconic street has been adorned with electric lights, creating a festive and vibrant atmosphere for residents and visitors. City authorities are leaving no stone unturned to ensure smooth celebrations. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) conducted an inspection of Brigade Road and MG Road to assess security arrangements, crowd management measures, and overall preparedness for the New Year. Enhanced police presence, traffic management plans, and emergency response teams have been put in place.

### Bengaluru authorities seize 15 properties over unpaid taxes

**Bengaluru**

Bengaluru authorities have taken strict action against property owners with pending tax dues. The Revenue Collection Team, consisting of Deputy Commissioners, Revenue Officers, Assistant Revenue Officers, and other staff from the Mahadevapura Zonal limits of Bengaluru East Municipal Corporation (MCC), sealed a total of 15 properties for non-payment of property tax. This move comes as part of the municipal corporation's ongoing efforts to enforce compliance and recover long-outstanding tax arrears. Officials said the action aims to ensure timely payment of property taxes, which are vital for funding civic services and infrastructure development.

# IndiGo issues travel advisory amid dense fog in B'luru

## Low visibility and dense fog on Thursday in Bengaluru has impacted flight schedules resulting in delays

**BENGALURU**

IndiGo on Thursday issued a travel advisory warning passengers about flight disruptions caused by dense fog and low visibility over Bengaluru. The airline said it is closely monitoring weather conditions and providing full support to ensure safe and smooth travel for its passengers.

In its advisory, IndiGo stated, we are keeping a close watch on the weather and doing our best to get you where you need to be, safely and smoothly.

The advisory urged travellers to stay up to date on their flight status via the airline's official channels. We request that you stay updated on your flight status bit.ly/3ZWAQXd. Please be assured that our teams are here to assist you at every step and provide full support, the advisory further read.

Here's hoping clearer skies help us serve you better soon, and thank you for your patience and understanding during this challenging time, it added.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, IndiGo Airlines confirmed

continued operational stability ahead of the holiday season and said it has been carrying over one million customers per three-day period.

In a statement, the airline said, we have been consistently operating 2,100-2,200 flights and carrying over one million customers every three days. We have been flying to and from all 138 operational destinations across our network while maintaining the IndiGo standards of on-time performance. With this, we are pleased to confirm that we are fully prepared to cater to the surge in demand during this holiday season.

Looking ahead, we are all set to welcome our and India's first Airbus A321XLR, which will redefine medium-to-long-haul flying for travellers in India and the subcontinent. We look forward to using these aircraft to connect Delhi and Mumbai with Athens starting 23 January 2026, as previously announced, the IndiGo spokesperson said.

We are also evaluating additional domestic and international destinations in line with our fleet expansion plans and will share further updates in due course.

In recent days, the aviation sector experienced industry-wide disruptions due to dense fog, particularly across northern India. Like all airlines, we were impacted; however, operations were effectively managed under the circumstances to maintain operational stability, it said.

# Over 400 emission testing centres shut across state

**BENGALURU**

State's vehicle emission monitoring system has all but collapsed, with over 400 emission checking centres shut across the state, after the Transport department failed to supply hologram stickers for nearly a month.

Most of the closed centres are attached to petrol bunks, crippling routine emission testing and leaving thousands of motorists stranded without valid certificates, and vulnerable to penalties.

Industry representatives say it is a forced closure of Pollution Under Control (PUC) centres. We had to keep shutters down for the past eight days, said BR Ravindranath, former President of Karnataka State Petroleum Dealers' Association. Of the 2600 PUC centres in the state, a majority are now non-functional. Without hologram stickers, certificates cannot

be issued.

The crisis is due to a delay in the procurement and distribution of security holograms, a mandatory requirement meant to prevent forgery. The delay has triggered a chain reaction, centres cannot operate, vehicle owners cannot comply with the law, and enforcement agencies are policing a rule the government itself has made impossible to follow.

The disruption comes at a time when the state is pushing for cleaner mobility and stricter emission norms. The impasse exposes administrative bottlenecks and poor coordination within the Transport department. One

> There were complaints that some unscrupulous persons were using fake holograms and continuing to run the emission centres. With no clear timeline for resolution, pressure is mounting on the government to immediately restore supplies, a consumer demanded.

officer said on condition of anonymity,

We have written to the government but they have not cleared it for about two months, citing one reason or other. Now they have sent it to the Finance department and no one knows how long it will take. For about a month we distributed 5 lakh hologram stickers as an emergency measure but now we cannot continue that also.

# B'luru Rural dist team wins 72 medals at State Masters Athletics

**BENGALURU**

The Bangalore Rural District team that participated in the 44th State Level Masters Athletics Games held in Kolar has won a total of 72 medals, 23 gold, 24 silver and 25 bronze. Sushila Murthy, Rajeshwari Mulgund, Ramakrishna Rao who participated in shot put, hammer and discus throw in various age groups have achieved success by winning three gold medals each. The winners have been selected for the National Level Masters Athletics Games to be held in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala from January 28, said State Masters Athletics Association Secretary HC Shanmugam.

K Manjunath has achieved first place in 5 km walk and got a gold medal. Other gold medal winning veteran athletes include HR Shankar, J Manjunath, Dr Rameshappa, N Kagali, PS Manjunath,

Soubhagya, Jayapadma, A Ramu, Mallikarjun.

Shivanand, N Ramachandra, N Prema Kumar, HR Somnath, AR Bhargava, HS Jagannath, C Umesh, M Sujatha, Prabhavathi, Vijayalakshmi, S Ramesh, Mukesh, Syed Ahmed, Fayaza Ahmed have won silver medals.

Masters Association District President S Narayanaswamy congratulated the winners.

# IT colleagues' Christmas trip turns tragic, one dies in accident

**BENGALURU**

Six colleagues from the same IT company who were on their way to a bachelor party during the Christmas holidays were caught in a fire accident, one of which died. The incident has left a deep shock. Initial reports have said that Bindu is among those who died in the accident. Manjunath, Sandhya, Shashank, Dilip, Bindu and Kavita are the IT employees who were caught in the accident.

Information about two of the missing persons has been released after the tragedy. Shashank and Sandhya are being treated at Vaidehi Hospital on Vitthal Mallya Road in Bengaluru. More information about their condition is awaited.

The group of seven friends were on their way to a private resort in Gokarna to celebrate the bachelor party of Kavita, who was set to get married in February. The couple was on their way to celebrate with their friends and girlfriends when the tragedy unexpectedly struck, turning their happy moments into sorrow.

# First special train from Bengaluru to Vijayapura via Hubballi, Gadag

**BENGALURU**

It is welcome that South Western Railway has run a special train from Bengaluru to Vijayapura via Hubballi and Gadag bypass to reduce passenger congestion during the Christmas and year-end holidays. Minister MB Patil has urged that this should be converted into a regular train service in the coming days.

Speaking about this on Thursday, he said that continuous efforts are being made to ensure that trains from Bengaluru to Vijayapura should run through both these bypasses. In this regard, several meetings have been held with the South Western Railway officials. He said that it is a matter of happiness that our efforts have got the first success in the form of a special train.

Since the trains were running through the bypass, there was no proposal to change the engines on both sides. My position is that if all the trains going towards Bagalkot and Vijayapura were made to run through the bypass in this manner, the travel time could be reduced. He said that meetings have been held with railway officials in this regard.

This special train had only nine stops. The train, which left Yeshwantpur on Wednesday night, reached at 11 am on Thursday morning instead of 9 am. Since it was a special train, it could not reach on time. People of Vijayapura district have expressed their appreciation for this special train service, they said.

Efforts are being made to reduce the train travel time between Bengaluru-Vijayapura from the current 14 hours to 10 hours. Therefore, it has been requested that the Golagumbaz Express train between Mysore-Phandarpur should be run permanently via Hubballi and Gadag bypass. In this regard, a letter will be written to Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav and Somanna, stating that it will be dealt with. He claimed that it would be more convenient if the trains departing from Bangalore at night were changed so that they reach Vijayapura by 6-7 am.

# CM Siddaramaiah to leave for Delhi today

**BENGALURU**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will leave for Delhi on Friday to attend the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting.

The CWC meeting has been scheduled for December 27 at Indira Bhavan in Delhi. The Chief Ministers of the three Congress-ruled states have been invited to attend the meeting.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will be accompanied by Telangana's Revanth Reddy and Himachal Pradesh's Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu. State CWC members B.K. Hariprasad, Nasir Hussain and Veerappa Moily will participate. Earlier, the Chief Minister had said that he was not invited to the CWC meeting. Now it is official that the Chief Minister will go to Delhi on Friday.

There will be a discussion on the five state elections, Vote Chori, National Herald and the fight against the central government regarding the amendment of the MGNREGA Act.

# 'Cong High Command should correct corruption in the state'

**BENGALURU**

Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi has said that the Congress High Command should do the work of resolving the internal strife in the state, otherwise it will have an impact.

Speaking to media persons, he said that the internal turmoil in the government will affect the party in the upcoming elections. The high command must work to rectify this, otherwise it will be difficult. Rajanna has written a letter to Rahul Gandhi.

He said that what has happened is what has happened, what will happen next remains to be seen.

Now the elections are coming up in 2028. What new experiments will the BLAs do. We should be cautious about that. Our President has said it very clearly. You should solve it yourself. So, he said that they should solve it themselves.

Whoever is there should resolve it themselves. Captain, Vice Captain, this is not it, they should resolve it themselves. Only two should talk. There is no chance for a third person. They said nothing happened inside Delhi. They said that not everyone had a dinner meeting in Belagavi, Satish Jarkiholi said.

# High Court order ignored, illegal construction continues

**BENGALURU**

Members of the HAL 3rd Stage Taxpayers' and Residents' Association say they have been running from pillar to post, urging authorities to stop illegal constructions, particularly those violating building norms in their locality. The association claimed it has written to concerned authorities more than 40 times since February 2025, seeking action on the recurring issue, but has received no response.

Frustrated by what they described as the aloofness of the Bruhat Bengaluru City Corporation (BCCC) authorities, the association filed a writ petition before the High Court.

During the hearing, the court directed the BCCC Assistant Executive Engineer to issue appropriate notices to respondent No. 5, Moonlight FNB Pvt Ltd, to bring the construction in line with the sanctioned plan. The court further instructed that if the construction was not in accordance with approvals, it should be stopped forthwith and, if necessary, local police assistance should be sought.

The construction of the building violates setback norms and has become a nuisance for us. As a senior citizen who recently underwent knee surgery, I am finding it extremely difficult to get proper sleep due to the ongoing construction. It is frightening to imagine the situation once the proposed bar and restaurant open, said Lata, the immediate neighbour of the site. She added that the building lacked adequate space for parking vehicles.

Meenakshi Prabhu, Secretary of the HAL 3rd Stage Taxpayers' and Residents' Association, said she had informed multiple authorities about the violations. "We have met several officials seeking a solution, but nothing has changed. BCCC engineers failed to either inspect the building under construction or direct the property owner to stop the work," she said.

MEASURE TO CONTROL CRIME RATE

# *New police station in Chikkabanavara to curb crime*

**BENGALURU**

With offences soaring in industrial and migrant-heavy neighbourhoods, the government approves a new police station to strengthen law-and-order enforcement

As crime cases have increased nearly tenfold in the Peenya Soldevanahalli judistrication over the past three years, an area crowded with industrial workers, students and migrants, authorities have approved the setting up of a new Chikkabanavara Law and Order Police Station to improve policing and curb offences such as robbery, drug peddling, housebreaking, cybercrime and crimes against women and children.

According to official data, the jurisdictions of Soladevanahalli and Peenya police stations together have reported an average of 3,010 crime cases over the past three years, marking a sharp rise compared to earlier periods. Citing this surge and the growing pressure on existing police infrastructure, the Director General and Inspector General of Police (DG & IGP) recently proposed the establishment of a new police station to strengthen law and order in the area.

The proposal was examined by the DG & IGP and subsequently approved by the state government. Following this, an official order was issued to establish the Chikkabanavara Law and Order Police Station under the Bengaluru City Police Commissionerate. The new police station will function with 51 redeployed personnel, including one Police Inspector, two Police Sub-Inspectors, 12 Head Constables and 36 Police Constables.

To address offences such as robbery, drug-related crimes, housebreaking, cybercrime, and crimes against women and children, authorities stressed the need for a dedicated police station at Chikkabanavara. In the proposal submitted to the government, the DG & IGP referred to the recommendations of the Dharmaveera National Police Commission, which advocates the establishment of new police stations based on crime load and population density. While the commission had earlier suggested a benchmark of 300 IPC cases for setting up a police station, officials noted that changing policing practices over the past 40 years have made it difficult to apply these recommendations in their original form. To curb rising crime within Bengaluru city limits, a request has been made to establish and sanction a new Chikkabanavara Law and Order Police Station by selecting out certain areas from the Bagalgunte and Soladevanahalli police station jurisdictions.

# Midday Drama in Chamarajanagar: Tigress Trapped in Iron Cage

A tigress trapped in an iron cage after repeated cattle attacks highlights escalating human–wildlife conflict in Karnataka's forest-border villages, alarming residents and officials alike statewide

**SHYAM SUNDAR VATTAM**
**MYSURU**

In a tense and dramatic midday incident, a full-grown tigress was trapped inside an iron cage after it walked in to feast on a calf placed as bait by forest officials.

The moment the tigress stepped inside, the heavy iron doors slammed shut, leaving the powerful big cat confined within the trap. The incident occurred on Thursday afternoon in a farmland at Depapura village in Gundlupete taluk, sending waves of fear and curiosity through the region.

The tigress, believed to have strayed from the Bandipur Tiger Reserve's Gundlupet buffer zone, had been repeatedly preying on cattle in nearby villages. Alarmed by the frequent attacks, villagers had demanded immediate action. Responding swiftly, forest department personnel installed a Tumakuru-model iron cage and launched an intensive combing operation in the area.

Unaware of the imminent danger, the tigress entered the cage to eat the calf tethered inside. Within seconds, the trap was triggered. As the cage doors shut, the tigress erupted in deafening roars, shaking the iron bars and the nerves of everyone nearby.

Local residents, alerted by the thunderous growls, rushed toward the farmland. On seeing a large crowd gathering around the cage, the tigress became even more aggressive, roaring and charging at the iron grills. Forest officials rushed to the spot and strictly controlled the crowd, prohibiting anyone from going near the cage as the tigress was extremely ferocious after falling into a man-made trap.

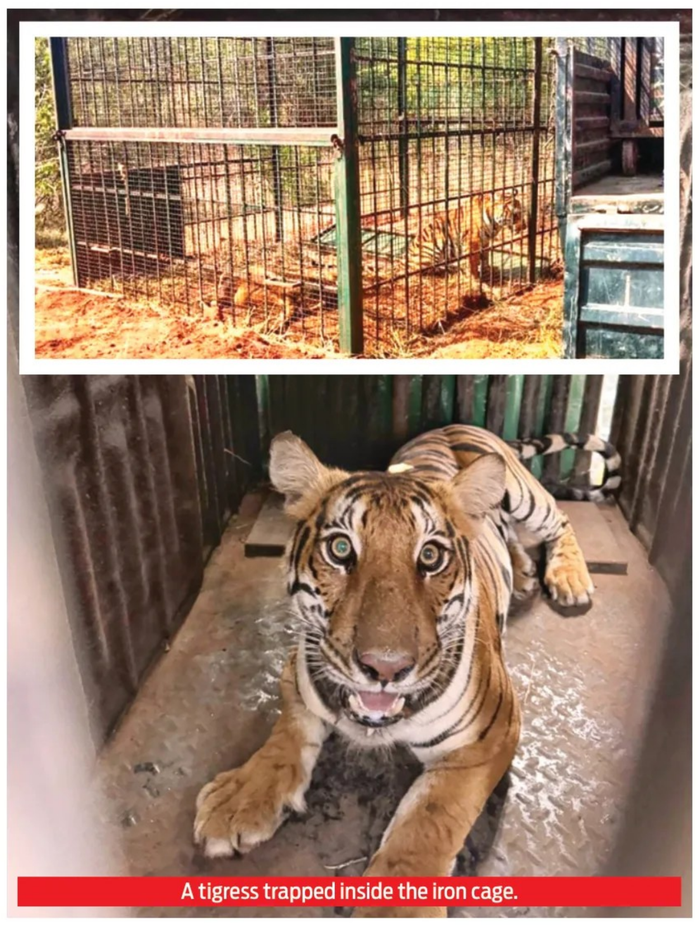
The urgency to trap the tigress had intensified after a brutal incident on December 13, when a farmer named Gurumallappa lost his cow while grazing it in the same village. The tigress had attacked the animal, biting its neck and killing it on the spot, triggering widespread panic and anger among villagers.

Forest staff are maintaining a strict vigil and are waiting to reunite the tigress with her cubs before releasing the entire family deep into the forest, far away from human habitation.

**Another Close Shave:** Tractor Driver and Boy Escape Tiger Attack in Mysuru District

In a separate but equally chilling incident earlier this week, a tractor driver and a cattle-grazing boy narrowly escaped a tiger attack near Shettahalli village, close to Nagarahole National Park in Mysuru district. The tractor driver sped away in panic, while the boy saved himself by running into a pumpset shed. The tiger later injured an ox before disappearing into the forest.

These back-to-back incidents underscore the growing human–wildlife conflict in forest-border regions, where vigilance, swift response, and humane conservation efforts have become more critical than ever.


A tigress trapped inside the iron cage.

A majestic view of St Philomena's Church in Mysuru on Thursday.

# Christmas celebrated in religious fervor in Mysuru

**MYSURU**

The Christmas festival, a symbol of peace and friendship, is being celebrated everywhere with joy and enthusiasm. At St. Philomena's Church in Mysuru, a special midnight prayer service was held. The church, illuminated with decorative lights, artistic adornments, and star-shaped displays, glittered as a collective prayer was offered during the installation of the Infant Jesus.

As a major event of the Christmas celebrations, special prayer rituals were conducted late at night. Thousands of Christian devotees gathered at the church and devoutly commemorated the birth of Jesus Christ. Christmas carols and devotional hymns resonated throughout the church □□□□□. The collective prayer service was led by the Bishop of Mysuru, Most Reverend Dr. S. J. Francis Serrão. On the occasion of the festival, special prayers were offered for peace in the country, prosperity of the state, and the health of the people. Remembering the message of love, forgiveness, and brotherhood preached by Jesus Christ, devotees exchanged greetings with one another. The joy of Christmas was clearly visible on everyone's faces.Santa Claus impersonators were a special attraction for children, distributing sweets and gifts, which further enhanced the festive cheer among them. People arrived at the church with their families and took part in the celebrations with great enthusiasm.

In the tourist city of Mysuru, both domestic and international tourists witnessed the Christmas festivities.

Children offering prayers at a church in Mysuru on Thursday on the occasion of Christmas Celebrations.

Women from various fields were felicitated in Mysuru under the banner of Bhairavi Gowdathiyara Balaga.

# MLA Harish stresses unity among women to face any situation boldly

**MYSURU**

Chamaraja Constituency MLA K. Harish Gowda said that when women remain united, they can face any situation.

Speaking after inaugurating the third annual anniversary celebrations of the Bhairavi Gowdathiyara Balaga and a felicitation programme for achievers, held at the District Kannada Sahitya Parishat Bhavan in Vijayanagar, he said of late, women are getting more opportunities in all fields. They should organise themselves and make proper use of these opportunities.

Sri Someshwaranatha Swamiji of the Adichunchanagiri Mysuru Branch Math sought to know can mothers ever be bad? Except for children, mothers are never bad. All those who have given birth to ideal men are great mothers.

Bhairavi Awards were presented to Santasa Foundation Founder and Managing Director Dr. Soumya Dinesh, education expert Shobha Rajasekhar, Director of Varsha Associates Private Limited Rani Kumar, Alpa Dispens cyclist Veena Ashok, and Dr. Chaitra Bharat of the Food and Agriculture Business Leadership Institute.

# AHINDA Convention in Mysuru on Jan 26 in support of CM Siddaramaiah

**MYSURU**

The followers and well-wishers of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah are planning to hold a mammoth AHINDA convention at the Dasara Exhibition Ground in Mysuru on January 25 to urge the Congress High Command to continue Siddaramaiah as the CM till 2028.

Through this, they want to send a message to the party national leaders that the party would suffer a huge loss if the incumbent CM was replaced with someone.

Speaking at a meeting organized by the AHINDA here, State Backward Classes Awareness Forum President K.S. Shivaramu and leaders of AHINDA made a formal announcement about the AHINDA conference in Mysuru next month.

They said today there is political confusion in the state and such an atmosphere has been created. The Congress party high command needs to clear this confusion. In this context, it is planned to hold an AHINDA conference, and about 20-30 thousand people from all the taluks of the district will participate in the conference.

They claimed that Siddaramaiah has worked for the people as Chief Minister between 2013 and 2018 due to which the Congress Party secured 130 plus seats in the 2023 Assembly polls. The Congress Party came to power with a majority. Siddaramaiah is the leader of backward classes and has done a lot for the uplift of those communities. The AHINDA is the backbone of the Congress party and nearly 75 per cent of the AHINDA votes have come to the Congress Party.

They said that they voted with the confidence that politicians like Siddaramaiah would provide justice to the AHINDA communities. The population of the AHINDA communities was around 4 crore and it is socially, economically and educationally backward. Siddaramaiah has spent Rs. 162 crore on a caste survey but tragically, this report was not implemented. However, Siddaramaiah said that it will be implemented as the Chief Minister. The report will be implemented only if he continue as the CM.

Not aimed at anybody

They clarified that the convention is not against anyone and they have no objection to D.K. Shivakumar becoming the Chief Minister as he is also eligible to hold the post. However, if the backward classes want to prosper, their only demand is that Siddaramaiah should continue as the CM for another two and a half years.

Former director of Rangayana, H. Janardhan (Janni), said today, no one talks about the development of backward classes and they are being humiliated at every step. And for this reason they wanted a mass leader like Siddaramaiah.

Journalist T. Gururaj said that the Ahinda Samavesha was held before Siddaramaiah became the Chief Minister. It has also been held after that. This conference is not against any leader or party.

AHINDA working president Shivanna said Siddaramaiah is an AHINDA leader and never identified himself with any caste. Siddaramaiah's hard work is enough for the Congress to come to power in the state as he is a mass leader of the Congress party.

District Madiwala Sangha President Ravinandan, District Uppara Sangha President Yogesh Uppar, Savita Samaj President Manjunath, Balakrishna Sangapur, K.R. Bank President Basappa, Municipal Workers' Association President Mara, Savita P. Mallesh, Shivappakote, Rajesh, Kalim, Mogannachar, Maranna, Kendaganna, Dollegowda, Nagendra, Govinda, Revanna, Basappa, Malegowda and others were present.

Karnataka State Backward Classes Awareness Forum President Shivaram addressing a meeting in Mysuru in connection with holding a AHINDA conference in Mysuru on January 25.

# Christmas celebrated at Gangotri School

**MYSURU**

Christmas Day was celebrated at Gangothri Public School, located on Bogadi Main Road in Mysuru, with the cooperation of the school management, teachers, and students.

The children dressed in the colourful dress celebrated the birth of Jesus Christst. A person in the attire of Santa Claus distributed the gifts and the cake to the kids.

# Atal's Birth Anniversary: Sweaters distributed to women vendors

**MYSURU**

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, various service activities were organised in front of Devaraj Market in the city on Thursday by the Pratap Simha Fans Association of the Chamaraja Assembly Constituency.

Senior BJP leaders Tennis Gopi, M.B. Manjunath, and retired principal Nagaraj were felicitated and congratulated by former Member of Parliament Pratap Simha.

Following this, sweaters were distributed to roadside vendors. Sweets were then distributed, and the birth anniversary was celebrated in a meaningful manner.

On this occasion, BJP leaders M.V. Ravishankar, Satish, B.U. Umesh, S.K. Dinesh, Balanna, Jayappa, Brahmachar, programme organisers R. Paramesh Gowda, Pramod, Sandesh, Shravan Mali, Kiran, M.N. Manjunath, Surendra, Prakash, Abhishek Gowda, Vinod, Raghu, Nazarbad Abhi, Srinivas, and others were present.

# Parties must create emergency fund for the sake of workers in distress

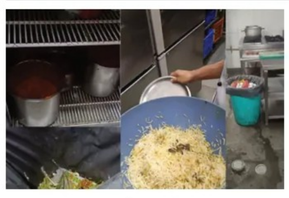
**MYSURU**

A 74th birthday felicitation programme was organised by the Mysuru City and Rural District Congress Committee in honour of Mysuru City Congress Committee President R. Murthy, fondly known as the "Congress Sarathi of Mysuru." Presiding over the programme, District Congress Committee President Dr. B. J. Vijay Kumar said that ordinary grassroots workers who have served national and regional political parties for decades often fall victim to life-threatening illnesses and struggle to meet living and medical expenses. He urged all political parties to establish emergency funds and extend financial assistance from these funds to their poor workers during times of crisis. Such support would give meaning to the lives of these workers.This should be implemented by all political parties across the country. Citing his own experience in Mysuru, Dr. Vijay Kumar said he had personally witnessed several longtime grassroots workers from different parties who, without ever attaining political office, succumbed to age-related and terminal illnesses as they were unable to afford medical treatment. Referring to R. Murthy as the "Congress captain of Mysuru," he said Murthy joined the party in 1974 and has now completed 74 years of age, and therefore the party was according him traditional honours. He had closely observed Murthy's party commitment since his student days. Birthdays of most public representatives are celebrated at the Congress office, but the celebration of the party president's birthday holds special importance.

He expressed concern that those who choose politics and remain committed to party ideology often spend most of their lives for the party, leaving little time for family, personal life, or even their own health. Many Congress leaders had been lost over the years after sacrificing their health for the party. The office-bearers to first build their personal lives before attempting to build a life in politics.

Emphasising "party first" and stating that no one is bigger than the party, he said the City and District Congress committees have worked together in unity. After coming to power, elected representatives should not forget party workers, who are the real pillars of the organisation. Former Minister Kote Shivanna said that in recent times MLAs and ministers have been giving less recognition to party workers, which could have adverse effects on strengthening the party in the future. Accepting the honour, Murthy said that in the Congress party, positions given by the party are greater than positions given by the government. He was proud to be serving as a Congress president and described the honour as one of the most special and unforgettable moments of his life.Those present at the programme included Ashok Puram P. Vasu, former mayors Chikkanna, Mahila Congress President. Pushpalatha Chikkanna, District OBC Unit President Nagesh, Eshwar Chakkadi, M. K. Ashok, Dairy Venkatesh, Sham Yogesh, Ramesh, Venkatasubbayya, Girish, Mahesh, Shivashankar Murthy, Timber Nagaraj, Madeva, Asha, Vanaja, Subhavani, Mohan Kumari, and others.

## QUICK READ



### Food Safety Raids Expose Poor Hygiene

**RAICHUR**

Concerns over food safety in Karnataka have intensified after a major inspection drive in Raichur uncovered poor-quality, stale and adulterated food items in several hotels, restaurants and bakeries. The raids, conducted by officials from the Raichur Municipal Corporation along with the Revenue Department, Food Safety Department and Health Department, revealed alarming lapses in hygiene, food quality and regulatory compliance. A total of 19 establishments, including hotels, restaurants, bakeries and bars, were inspected during the drive. Officials were shocked to find two- to three-day-old meat and paneer stored in freezers, raising serious concerns about public health. In addition, several adulterated and suspicious food items were seized from different locations, indicating a blatant disregard for food safety norms.

### Wild Elephant Herd Strays Villages, Farmers Suffer Heavy

**ANEKAL**

The threat of wild elephants has intensified in the Tamil Nadu border areas of Anekal taluk in Bengaluru Rural district, leaving farmers anxious and crops devastated. A large herd of wild elephants that strayed out of the forest has entered agricultural land, causing widespread damage and creating panic among residents of border villages. According to local sources, a herd of more than forty wild elephants has been spotted in the Shanamavu area near Hosur. The elephants have been camping in and around Shanamavu, Pirjehalli and Nayakanahalli villages for the past two days, frequently moving through farmlands during the night and early morning hours. Their prolonged presence has intensified fears of further destruction and possible human-elephant conflict.

### Prabhu Camp Sahayamata Ashram Empowers Women

**KAMPLI**

Along with being an educational institution, the Prabhu Camp Sahayamata Ashram in the taluk has emerged as a vital support system for women, helping them move towards self-sufficiency and financial independence. By offering structured sewing training and encouraging the formation of self-help groups, the ashram has become a lifeline for women seeking sustainable sources of income. In recent times, the demand for sewing and tailoring skills has increased significantly, creating new livelihood opportunities for women and young girls. Recognising this need, the ashram has been actively training women in tailoring, enabling them to acquire practical skills that can be used both at home and professionally. As a result, many women who have completed the training are now earning an income alongside managing their daily household responsibilities.

# Police Turn Educators, Take Road Safety Lessons to Auto Drivers

## Mandya police adopted an innovative approach to crime prevention by educating auto drivers

**MANDYA**

In a unique and people-centric initiative undertaken during Crime Prevention Month, the Mandya police have stepped out of their traditional enforcement role and assumed the responsibility of educators on city roads. In an effort to promote safer driving practices and reduce road-related offences, police personnel in Mandya have begun conducting daily awareness sessions on traffic rules, with auto-to-rickshaw drivers becoming their primary students.

Under this initiative, police officials are holding on-the-spot classes right on the streets, engaging directly with auto drivers who navigate Mandya's busy roads throughout the day. Instead of issuing fines or warnings, officers are focusing on explaining traffic rules, road discipline, and the importance of responsible driving in ensuring public safety.

The programme aims to create awareness rather than fear, encouraging voluntary compliance with traffic regulations.

The initiative is being spearheaded by the Mandya Police as part of their broader efforts to curb accidents, improve traffic management, and strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the public. During these roadside sessions, auto drivers are educated on key aspects such as lane discipline, adherence to speed limits, avoiding wrong-side driving, use of indicators, and respecting pedestrian crossings.

Police officials explained that auto drivers were chosen as a key focus group because they are among the most visible and frequent road users in the city. By sensitising them to traffic rules, the police hope to create a ripple effect that influences other motorists as well. The sessions also address common violations observed in the city and clarify doubts raised by drivers regarding traffic laws.

Auto drivers attending the classes were seen listening attentively as police personnel explained rules in a simple and practical manner. Many drivers welcomed the initiative, stating that such direct interaction helps them better understand regulations that are often ignored or misunderstood. Several participants said the friendly approach adopted by the police made them more receptive to learning and following the rules.

Officials said the programme will continue throughout Crime Prevention Month, with similar awareness drives planned for other categories of road users in the coming days. The Mandya police believe that education and engagement are as important as enforcement in preventing crime and accidents.

# Man Arrested for Stripping Friend, Killing Him in Front of Lover

**BELAGAVI**

A man has been arrested for the brutal murder of his friend in Ghataprabha in Belagavi district.

The accused, Pradeep Nayak of Chikkodi, allegedly stripped his friend Tukaram Shinge, a labourer from Maheshwadi village in Athani taluk, and killed him in front of his lover on October 22.

Police said the crime was planned following personal rivalry. Pradeep was arrested after 2.5 months from a railway station in Nira, Pune, while attempting to flee.

During interrogation, he reportedly confessed to another murder committed in Hubballi in 2022.

Further investigation is under way.

# ₹3,400 Crore Lies Unclaimed in Karnataka Bank Accounts

**MANGALURU**

**Statewide RBI-led campaign aims to reunite depositors with long-forgotten savings across banks.**

An estimated ₹3,400 crore has been lying unclaimed in bank accounts across Karnataka for over a decade, officials revealed at the District Consultative Committee (DCC) and District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting held here on Wednesday.

Arun Kumar, Assistant General Manager, Reserve Bank of India, Bengaluru Regional Office, said the RBI has been implementing a special statewide campaign for the past three months under the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund (DEAF) to help depositors reclaim their money. The campaign will continue until December 31, though customers can approach banks to claim their unclaimed deposits even after the deadline.

Mr. Kumar said nearly 80 per cent of the unclaimed accounts have balances below ₹10,000. Many of these accounts are several decades old and suffer from outdated Know Your Customer (KYC) details, inactive or changed mobile numbers, and in many cases, the demise of the original account holders. Updating customer details and mobile numbers has been identified as the first step in the recovery process.

The unclaimed deposits include amounts in savings bank accounts, fixed deposits and current accounts. Depositors or their legal heirs can check details of such accounts through the RBI's UDGAM portal, which consolidates unclaimed deposit information from multiple banks on a single platform.

Dakshina Kannada Lead Bank District Chief Manager Kavitha Shetty said the district alone accounts for around ₹140 crore lying unclaimed across nearly six lakh bank accounts. Of this, about ₹20 crore has already been returned to depositors linked to 830 accounts under the DEAF initiative, she said.

Dakshina Kannada Member of Parliament Capt. Brijesh Chowta stressed the need for stronger public awareness campaigns to ensure wider participation. He urged banks to proactively reach out to customers through pamphlets, local programmes and direct communication.

The MP also expressed concern over delays in the implementation of welfare schemes and called for a clear action plan to improve delivery and coverage of flagship initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and the Atal Pension Yojana (APY).

# Police Arrest One Accused, Recover Rs 55 Lakh in KSRTC Bus Theft Case

**HUDIBANDE**

The Hudibande police have cracked a major theft case involving the loss of Rs 55 lakh from a Bengaluru–Hyderabad KSRTC AC sleeper bus, arresting one accused and recovering the entire stolen amount. However, three other accused involved in the crime remain absconding, police officials said.

According to the investigation, the arrested accused has been identified as Aslam Khan, a native of Madhya Pradesh. He was apprehended in Madhya Pradesh, and the stolen cash was recovered from his possession. Police revealed that all four accused involved in the theft belong to Madhya Pradesh and are part of a gang that targeted passengers travelling in long-distance luxury buses. The remaining accused — Manir Khan, Abhya Khan and Sheru — are currently on the run. Police teams have been formed and efforts are underway to trace and arrest them. Investigators said the gang was involved in stealing valuables, jewellery and large sums of money from unsuspecting bus passengers.

To facilitate their criminal activities, the accused had rented a room near Beachaganahalli Cross in Chikkaballapur district. Police said the gang used the room as a temporary hideout and had stored the stolen cash there before fleeing back to Madhya Pradesh. The money was reportedly kept safely at the location until it was recovered during the course of the investigation.

The theft took place on the 8th of this month when Venkateshwar Rao was travelling in a KSRTC AC sleeper luxury bus from Bengaluru to Hyderabad. When the bus driver stopped at a hotel near Arur village in Chikkaballapur taluk to allow passengers to have lunch, Rao left his bag containing Rs 55 lakh on his seat and stepped out to eat.

Upon returning to the bus, Rao discovered that his bag was missing.

# Police Arrest Two More Accused in SBI Robbery Case

**KAKANUR**

The Police have arrested two notorious thieves in connection with the sensational robbery at a State Bank of India locker in Kakanur village, bringing a major breakthrough in the case. The arrested accused have been identified as Akshay Ambore and Kunal Chavan, residents of Nayagaon in Chikali taluk of Maharashtra.

According to police officials, the arrests were made following sustained investigation and intelligence gathering related to the bank robbery that occurred on September 2, 2025. On that day, miscreants broke into an SBI locker in Kakanur village of Badami taluk in Bagalkot district and decamped with gold ornaments and cash. The robbery had caused widespread concern due to the high level of planning and execution involved.

Investigations revealed that the accused had meticulously planned the robbery nearly six months in advance. To avoid detection, they sprayed CCTV cameras inside the bank premises, did not carry mobile phones during the operation, and ensured that no fingerprints were left behind. Police said the methodical approach indicated the involvement of seasoned criminals.

Following the arrest of Akshay Ambore and Kunal Chavan, police seized gold ornaments worth Rs 25.90 lakh, cash, the car used for the crime, a gas cutter, a country-made firearm, two live bullets, iron rods and several other incriminating items. The recovery was made based on information provided by the accused during interrogation.

Earlier in the investigation, the Bagalkot district police had arrested two other accused, Mahmuda Nawan and Kamarul Khan, residents of Kakraal village in Uttar Pradesh, in connection with the same robbery.

With the latest arrests, a total of four accused have now been taken into custody in the case.

Police sources said that all the accused were involved in various criminal cases across different states and had come into contact with one another while lodged in jail earlier.

# Three Blackbucks Hunted in Chikkamagalur, Probe Ordered

**CHIKKAMAGALUR**

The illegal hunting of three blackbucks near a protected area in Chikkamagalur district has triggered serious concern, with the State government ordering a detailed probe into the incident. The animals — two females and one male, all believed to be under two years old — were found dead near Basuru Kaval, a designated conservation zone for the endangered species.

The case has raised suspicion after it emerged that the blackbucks were cremated soon after their discovery, without a comprehensive investigation. Locals and environmental activists alleged that the authorities hurriedly disposed of the carcasses to suppress the incident. Further controversy arose as the post-mortem examination was reportedly conducted without the presence of a qualified wildlife veterinarian, adding to accusations of procedural lapses and possible cover-up.

The blackbuck, a Schedule I species under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, enjoys the highest level of legal protection. Karnataka has identified specific zones in Chikkamagalur and Haveri districts to conserve the species. The killing of three animals close to such a protected area has raised questions about monitoring, enforcement, and the effectiveness of conservation measures.

Taking note of the allegations, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre ordered a thorough investigation into the incident and directed forest officials to submit a detailed report within a week. He instructed officials to identify those responsible and ensure strict action as per law.

The incident has sparked outrage among wildlife conservationists and local residents, who have demanded transparency and accountability. They have also called for stronger surveillance and stricter enforcement to prevent poaching.

**DOORSTEP RATION DELIVERY**

# *Government Launches 'Anna Suvidha' Scheme to Deliver Free Ration*

**MANDYA**

Long queues at ration shops have long been a source of hardship for elderly citizens, with senior citizens facing the greatest difficulty due to age-related health issues and lack of special facilities. Standing for hours in crowded lines often becomes physically exhausting, particularly for those who live alone and have no family support. Addressing this long-standing concern, the government has announced a major relief measure for elderly citizens through the implementation of the 'Anna Suvidha' scheme.

Under the Anna Suvidha Yojana, free ration food items will now be delivered directly to the homes of senior citizens aged above 75 years who are living alone. The initiative aims to ensure that elderly individuals are not forced to visit ration shops or stand in queues to access essential food supplies. Officials said the scheme has been designed with a clear focus on dignity, convenience, and food security for vulnerable seniors.

The decision comes after repeated concerns were raised about the difficulties faced by elderly people at ration outlets, where there are often no separate counters or priority arrangements for senior citizens. Many elderly beneficiaries, especially those with mobility issues or chronic illnesses, struggle to collect their ration every month. With this new scheme, the government hopes to eliminate these challenges and ensure uninterrupted access to food grains.

Under Anna Suvidha, eligible senior citizens will receive their allotted ration food items free of cost at their doorstep. Local authorities and fair price shop operators will be responsible for identifying eligible beneficiaries and coordinating last-mile delivery. The scheme specifically targets senior citizens who live alone, as they are considered the most vulnerable group.

Government officials said necessary preparations are underway to implement the scheme effectively, including beneficiary verification and delivery mechanisms. The initiative is also expected to reduce overcrowding at ration shops, benefiting other consumers as well.

## QUICK READ

### Seminar and Udyoga Siri Training Centre to Be Launched

**TUMAKURU**

Tumakuru city is set to host a meaningful intellectual and skill-development initiative on December 27 with the organization of the Do Not Be Disturbed, O Mind (Tallanisadiru Manave) seminar, along with the inauguration of the Udyoga Siri Training Centre. The event aims to address mental well-being while simultaneously empowering youth and job seekers through structured skill training programs. The seminar, titled Do Not Be Disturbed, O Mind, is designed to focus on inner strength, emotional balance, and mental resilience in the face of modern-day challenges.

### Ramanagara Hosts Devara Mela and Viramangala Rituals

**RAMANAGARA**

Ramanagara district witnessed a deeply spiritual and culturally significant event as the age-old Devara Mela (temple fair) was organized along with special Viramangala rituals at Kunchegaranahalli village. Rooted in local belief systems and folk traditions, the event reflected the community's collective faith in divine intervention to safeguard their land, livelihoods, and cultural identity. The central theme of the ritual was symbolically expressed through the belief that to save our land, God went away, a phrase that resonates strongly with the villagers' spiritual worldview.

### 2025 Sees Launch of ₹650 Crore Projects

**SHIDLAGHATTA**

The year 2025 has emerged as a landmark period for Shidlaghatta, marking the foundation for large-scale development and long-term urban growth. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, along with several cabinet ministers, laid the foundation stone and inaugurated multiple development works worth ₹650 crore on November 24, significantly boosting the town's infrastructure profile. Among the key projects launched was a high-tech silkworm market, aimed at strengthening the local sericulture sector and improving income opportunities for farmers and traders.

# District Hosts Dr. Puneeth Rajkumar Cup, Floodlit Cricket Tournament

A four-day state-level floodlit cricket tournament, the Dr. Puneeth Rajkumar Cup

**TUMAKURU**

Tumakuru city has turned into a hub of sporting excitement with the organization of the Dr. Puneeth Rajkumar Cup, a four-day state-level floodlit cricket tournament that has drawn teams and cricket enthusiasts from across Karnataka. The tournament has been organized with the objective of promoting cricket at the grassroots level while also paying tribute to the late actor and philanthropist Dr. Puneeth Rajkumar, who continues to inspire millions, especially the youth.

The matches are being played under floodlights at a prominent ground in the city, creating a vibrant and festive atmosphere during the evening hours. The floodlit format has added to the excitement, allowing working professionals, students, and families to attend the matches after daytime commitments. Large numbers of spectators have been turning up daily, cheering enthusiastically and supporting their favorite teams. Several teams representing different districts of the state are participating in the tournament, showcasing high-quality cricket and competitive spirit. Young and upcoming players are using this platform to demonstrate their skills, with many matches proving to be closely contested and entertaining. Organizers stated that the tournament was designed to provide exposure to talented cricketers and encourage discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship among participants.

A notable highlight of the event was the visit of a former Member of Parliament, who watched the matches and interacted with players and organizers. Speaking on the occasion, the former MP praised the organizers for conducting a well-structured state-level tournament and said that sports play a crucial role in shaping character and promoting a healthy lifestyle among youth.

He also remembered Dr. Puneeth Rajkumar as a beloved figure who stood for social values, simplicity, and inspiration, and said that organizing sports events in his name was a fitting tribute.

## RVCS Welfare Center Observes Birth Anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee

**RAMANAGARA**

Ramanagara city witnessed a solemn and respectful program as the City RVCS Welfare Center observed the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The event was organized to remember the life, vision, and enduring contributions of the veteran statesman, who is widely regarded as one of India's most respected political leaders. The program was held at the RVCS Welfare Center premises, where office-bearers, members, social workers, and local citizens gathered to pay floral tributes to the portrait of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The atmosphere was marked by dignity and reflection as speakers highlighted his legacy as a leader who rose above partisan politics and worked tirelessly for national unity and democratic values. Addressing the gathering, speakers recalled Vajpayee's role in strengthening India's global standing, promoting inclusive development, and upholding democratic traditions. They noted that his leadership style was rooted in dialogue, consensus-building, and respect for differing opinions, making him a rare figure admired across political lines.

## Union Minister V. Somanna to Review Railway Infrastructure

**RAMANAGARA**

Union Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti V. Somanna will undertake an official tour of Bengaluru South (Ramanagara) district today to review key railway infrastructure projects and assess the progress of ongoing development works.

According to the schedule released by the Minister's office, Somanna will depart from KSR Railway Station, Bengaluru, at 7.45 am and arrive at Bidadi Railway Station at 8.30 am. Upon arrival, he will conduct an inspection of Bidadi Railway Station from 8.30 am to 9.00 am. During the inspection, railway officials are expected to brief the Minister on passenger amenities, safety arrangements, operational facilities, and proposed improvements aimed at enhancing commuter convenience.

**Union Minister V. Somanna will undertake a tour of Bengaluru South district today to review railway infrastructure works.**

Following the station inspection, the Union Minister will visit the Toyota manufacturing plant at 9.20 am. The visit is expected to focus on issues related to industrial development, logistics connectivity, and the role of rail infrastructure in supporting major industries in the region.

Later in the day, Somanna will return to Bidadi Railway Station at 11.20 am and depart by train to Ramanagara Railway Station, where he is scheduled to arrive at 11.45 am. At Ramanagara, the Minister will inspect the ongoing Amrit Bharat Station redevelopment works. The inspection, scheduled to continue until 12.15 pm, will review the progress of modernisation efforts aimed at improving passenger facilities, accessibility, station aesthetics, and overall efficiency. After completing the inspection, Somanna will depart from Ramanagara Railway Station at 12.15 pm and proceed back to KSR Railway Station, Bengaluru. The visit is part of the Union Government's continued focus on strengthening railway infrastructure, upgrading stations under flagship schemes.

## State-Level Kabaddi Tournament Held by Venkatesh Guru Friends Association

**ANEKAL**

Anekal witnessed vibrant sporting enthusiasm as the state-level kabaddi tournament organized by the Venkatesh Guru Friends Association was held at the playground of the town's new secondary school. The tournament commenced on December 25 and created a festive atmosphere throughout the town, attracting large crowds of sports enthusiasts and local residents.

The event transformed Anekal into a hub of celebration and sportsmanship. To mark the occasion, the Anekal–Attibele Road was decorated with colorful electric lights, adding to the festive spirit and welcoming teams and spectators arriving from different parts of the state. The lively surroundings reflected the importance of kabaddi as a traditional sport deeply rooted in Karnataka's culture.

The tournament was conducted in collaboration with the Karnataka State Amateur Kabaddi Association and the Bangalore City District Amateur Kabaddi Association, ensuring adherence to official rules and professional standards. Their involvement played a key role in the smooth organization and credibility of the competition.

Senior kabaddi player B.C. Ramesh inaugurated the tournament. Speaking on the occasion, he encouraged young players to maintain discipline, teamwork, and dedication, and highlighted the importance of kabaddi in nurturing physical fitness and mental strength. His presence inspired participants and added prestige to the event.

The tournament featured a total of 15 prominent players representing state and national teams. Among them was professional kabaddi player Pawan, whose participation drew special attention from fans. Teams representing all 30 districts of Karnataka competed in the tournament, showcasing high-quality matches and intense competition over the course of the event.

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| 1. | GEM/2025/B/7041879 | GOODS | 03.01.2026 |

ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಜೆಮ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪೂರ್ಣ ವಿವರಗಳು ದೊರೆಯುತ್ತವೆ. ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: +919448999327/ +917829400192 ಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/-
ಉಪನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು (ಆಡಳಿತ) ಹಾಗೂ
ಪದನಿಮಿತ್ತ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಯೋಜನಾ ಸಮನ್ವಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿ
ಸಮಗ್ರ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ, ಸಾ.ಶಿ.ಇಲಾಖೆ,
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

ವಾ.ಸಾ.ಸಂ.ಇ/ವಾಪ್ರ/4673/ಎಸ್‌ಎಸ್‌ಸಿ/2025-26

**DEPARTMENT OF STAMPS AND REGISTRATION**
Office of the Inspector General of Registration and Commissioner of Stamps
Kandaya Bhavan, 8th Floor, K.G. Road, Bengaluru-560009
Tel : 080-22220436, Email: aigrcomp@karnataka.gov.in

No. Comp/100/2021-22 Date: 23-12-2025

**TENDER NOTIFICATION**

Tenders are invited by the Department of Stamps and Registration for **"Selection of an agency to provide Call Centre Services for the Department of Stamps and Registration"**. The tender forms, terms and conditions may be obtained through e-Procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** The last date for submitting completed tender forms is **23-01-2026 till 5.00 pm.** For further details please contact **Assistant Inspector General of Registration (Computers) & Project Director Kaveri (e-mail: aigrcomp@karnataka.gov.in).**

**Sd/- Inspector General of Registration and Commissioner of Stamps, Bengaluru**

DIPR/CP/YC/4659/2025-26

**MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED**
FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD
CIN : U65923KL2010PLC039179
**Regd Office:** IV/470A (OLD) W/638A (NEW) Manappuram House Valapad Thrissur, Kerala 680567
**Corp Office:** Manappuram Home Finance Limited, Third Floor, Unit No. 301 to 315, A Wing, 'Kanakia Wall Street', Andheri-Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai-400093, Maharashtra.
**Phone No.:** 022-66211000, **Website:** www.manappuramhomefin.com

**DEMAND NOTICE**

Whereas the Authorized Officer of Manappuram Home Finance Ltd., having our registered office at IV/470A (old) w/638A (new), Manappuram House, Valapad, Thrissur, Kerala-680567 and branches at various places in India (hereinafter referred to as "MAHOFIN") is a Company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 and a Financial Institution within the meaning of sub-clause (iv) of clause (m) of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act. 2002 (hereinafter referred so as the Act) read with Notification No. S.O. 3466 (E) dated 18th December, 2015 issued by the Govt. of India, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi, inter alia carrying on business of advancing loans for construction and / or purchase of dwelling units and whereas the Borrower / Co-Borrowers as mentioned in Column No. 2 of the below mentioned chart obtained loan from MAHOFIN and whereas MAHOFN being the secured creditor under the SARFAESI Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers as mentioned herein below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reasons. That in addition thereto for the purposes of information of the said borrowers enumerated below, the said borrowers are being informed by way of this public notice.

| Sr. No. | Name Of The Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Lan/Branch | Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created | Npa Date | Date Of Notice Sent & Outstanding Amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Chandrashekara N, Madamma R, Komala N, Chikkaswamy N, /C090COLONS 000005009331/ Mysore | Dasanuru Gramapanchayathi Khata No. 255, Unique No. 152200516181020093, Doddahomma Village, Dasanuru Gramapanchayath, Nanjungudu Taluk, Mysore, Karnataka, Pin: 571316 East To West 9.144 Meters & North To South 13.71 Meters. East-House of Puttamadamma, West-Road, South-Road, North-House of Jayamala | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.399215/- |
| 2 | Somesh R, Rama Nayaka, Savithri J, Vijaya Kumar L, /C090COLONS 000005010464/ Mysore | Property No. 04, Pl.D. No. 152200101913120049, Puradakatte Village, Kothegala Gramapanchayat, Hd Kote Block, Mysore, Karnataka, Pin: 571121 Measuring East To West 16.764 Meter & North To South 13.716 Meter. East-House of Shivamma, West-Private Property, South-House of Shivaraju, North-Road | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.430956/- |
| 3 | Shiva Kumara G, Manjula C, Shantakumara M G, /C090COLONS 000005010502/ Mysore | Marballi Gramapanchayathi Khatha No. 140/B, Unique No. 152200422084000202, Marballi Village, Mysuru Taluk, Mysore, Karnataka, Pin: 570008 Measuring East To West 7.62 Meters North To South 11.27 Meters. East-House & Vacant Site of Gowramma, West-Property of Dundushetty, South-Property of Puttamadashetty, North-Road | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.412635/- |
| 4 | Rayilabanu W, Akram Pasha A, /MHL00340013532/ Mysore | Property No. 11-171-6, Ward No. 14, Assessment No. 2136/1973/D, Pete Muslim Block, Malavalli, Mandya District, Karnataka, Pin: 571430 Measuring Totally 48.76 Square Meters. East-11-171-Block 11 East 2nd Main Road, West-11-104-84, South-11-171-8, North-11-171-4 | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.382989/- |
| 5 | Moulali Najirahamad Mulimani, Malanabi Moulali Mulimani, Hajarat Ali Najeerahmed Mulimani, /NHL00260025141/ Hubli | Gramthana Property Vpc No: 416/2, Property No. 151700200100200782, Total Measuring 55.74 Sq Mtr, Kanchinegalur Village, Tq: Hangal, Dt: Haveri, Karnataka, Pin: 581101. East-Property of Mehaboob Ali Karagudari, West-Property of Taimurabi Ismailsab Itagi, South-Property of Mohammd Yusufsab Mulla, North-Gram Panchayat Road | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.472994/- |
| 6 | Sagar Bhima Ambi, Radhika Sagar Ambi, Shivaji Bagadi, /NHL00980026715/ Belgaum | Total Measuring 924 Square Feet, Gpm No. 1193, Jarali Village, Jarali Gram Panchayath, Tq. Ghadhinglaj, Dist. Kolhapur, Maharashtra, Pin: 416551. East-Property of Shri Sagar Bhima Ambi, West-Shindewadi Road (Main Road), South-House of Deepak Ramu Ambi, North-House of Ramu Mallappa Ambi | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.469663/- |
| 7 | Mangalamma G, Sanju Kumar D R R, Rangaswamy R, Rangegowda D R, /MHL00920029559/ Vinayanagar Ramnagara | Property No. 75/107, E Khatha No. 152900100700500269, Total Measuring 124.80 Sq. Meter Area, Dasavara Village And Gramapanchayath, Channapatna Taluk, Ramanagara District, Karnataka, Pin: 562108. East-Motaiah S/O Madaiah, West-Road, South-Rangaswamy S/O Doddathammaiah, North-Ramaiah S/O Siddegowda | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.381561/- |
| 8 | Shobha M K, Swamy Gowda S, /MHL00340030317/ Mysore | Property No: 353/408, Pl.D. No: 152100601000400625, Manikyanahalli Village & Gram Panchayath, Pandavapura Taluk, Mandya District, Karnataka, Pin: 571434 Total Measuring 83.61 Square Meters. East-House Belongs To Rajegowda, West-House Belongs To Kempegowda Master, South-Government Hospital, North-Road | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.354421/- |
| 9 | Kushala Subhas Lamani, Subhas Lamani, Lakshmavva Lamani, Irappa Ramanna Lamani, Umesh Bojappa Lamani, /MHL00260031485/ Hubli | Residential Property Vpc No. 124/35/A, Property No. 151700203400400173, Total Measuring 107.02 Sq Mtr & Building Measuring 82.30 Sq Mtr, Rs. No. 10/*1/* Dolleshwar Gram Panchayath, Sevalal Village, Tq: Hangal, Dt: Haveri, Karnataka, Pin: 581102. East-Pwd Road, West-Gram Panchayat Road, South-Gram Panchayat Road, North-Property of Ramappa Shankrappa Lamani | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.411269/- |
| 10 | Dyulesab Nabisab Mulla, Rajesab Dulesab Mulla, Ratabi Dyulesab Mulla, Riyana Mahibubasab Shekha, /NHL00260031647/ Hubli | Residential 11B Property Bearing Vpc No. 379/58/1, Property No: 150100103200500668, Total Measuring 55.74 Sq Mtr, Neeraboodihal Village, Tq: Badami, Dist: Bagalkot, Karnataka, Pin: 587206. East-Property of Mastansab Dongrisab Tahsildar, West-Property of Munir Badeghar, South-Road, North-Property of Agniraj Chikkapatti | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.381706/- |
| 11 | Bhavani C R, H N Somashekhara, /MLAP0091034277/ Hassan | Property No. 151600501301100019, Gram Panchayat Property No. 18/1, Hirebelthi Village, Kantharajapura Gramapanchayath, Channarayapatna Taluk, Hassan (D), Karnataka, Pin: 573135 Totally Measuring 106.84 Square Meters. East-House Property of Sri. Puttaraju S/O Sri Puttegowda, West-Conservancy & House Property of Sri. Shivegowda S/O Sri. Kalegowda, South-Vacant Place, North-Road | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.377965/- |
| 12 | Manjula C S, C M Suresha, /MLAP0092032471/ Vinayanagar Ramnagara | Property No.47/3, Pl.D. No.152100500902020019, Cholasandra Village, Nelligere Gramapanchayathi, Nagamangala Taluk And Mandya District, Karnataka, Pin: 571418 Total Measuring 104.05 Square Meters. East-House Belongs To Mayanna, West-Road, South-House Belongs To Shivanna, North-House Belongs To Jayarama | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.399620/- |
| 13 | Asharani G, Girish V, /MHL00930016818/ Tumkur | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing Katha No. 1921 And E-Katha No. 150300402600302494, Measuring East To West: 4.2672 Meters And North To South: 12.4968 Meters, Situated At Sulibele Village, Sulibele Hobli, Hosakote Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, P.O. Sulebele, Bangalore Rural, Karnataka, Pin: 562129. East-Property of Muniyappa. D, West-House of Kumar M, South-House of Shankara S/O Muniyappa, North-Bidalapura Road | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.278591/- |
| 14 | Yashodamma A, Ankali R, Punith A, /MA10MHLONS 000005009279/ Shimoga | All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There on Being Bearing Site/Property No. 106, E-Property No. 152400101800500574, Measuring East-West 12.192 Meter X North-South 9.144 Meter, Total 111.48 Sq. Meter, Including 34.84 Sq. Meter House/Building, Situated At Hunasekatte Village, Kambadal Hosuru Village Panchayath, Bhadravathi Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka, Pin: 577115. East-Site No. 107, West-Site No. 105, South-Road, North-Vacant Place | 16-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.135549/- |
| 15 | Dileep N R, Sumithra D, Sandeep N R, Ramadasu D, Abhishek M D, /NLAP0092002842/ Vinayanagar Ramnagara | All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Niluvagilu Gramapanchayathi Katha No. 312/162A And As Per Form No. 11B Unique No. 152100201200800402 Situated At Niluvagilu Village, Maddur Taluk And Mandya Dist., Karnataka - 571419 Measuring East To West 5.1816 Mtr And North To South 16.154400000000002 Mtr. East-Road, West-House of Venkatesha, South-Road, North-Road | 17-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.850156/- |
| 16 | Doddathayamma C, Channaiah M, Doddaboramma B, Manoj L C, /NHL00340018782/ Mysore | All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Mahadevapura Gramapanchayathi Property No. 568 And As Per Form No. 11 B Unique No. 152100700200300881 Situated At Mahadevapura Village, Srirangapattana Taluk, Mandya District, Within The Jurisdiction of Mahadevapura Gramapanchayathi Measuring East To West: 6.400 Meters And North To South: 10.972 Meters, Totally Measuring 70.23 Square Meters, Karnataka, Pin: 571415. East-Galli & House of Srinivasa, West-Galli & House of Venkatamma, South-Road, North-Galli & House of Kalaboraiah | 17-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.509749/- |
| 17 | Swamy, Asha, Bhagyamma, /NHL00900042245/ Vivekananda Circle | Property No 49, Pl.D. No. 152200424092000102, Madduru Grama, Harohalli (Ja) Gramapanchayat, Mysore Block & District, Karnataka, Pin: 571125 Admeasuring 107.40 Sq. Mts. East-House of Chikkannaayka & Site of Swamy, West-Road, South-Road, North-House of Swamy Postman | 17-11-2025 | 25-11-2025 & Rs.553326/- |

Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers, as mentioned herein above, calling upon them to make payment of the total outstanding amount as shown herein above, against the respective Borrower / Co-Borrower, within 60 days of publication of this notice. Failure to make payment of the total outstanding amount together with further interest by the respective Borrower/ Co-Borrower, MAHOFIN shall be constrained to take u/s 13(4) for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described above, steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made hereunder. You are put to notice that the said mortgage can be redeemed upon payment of the entire amount due together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by MAHOFIN at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction or private treaty for transfer by way of sale, as detailed in Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act.
Take note that in terms of S-13 (13) of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby restrained from transferring and/or dealing with the Secured Properties in any manner by way of sale, lease or in any other manner.

**Date: 26th December 2025 | Place: KARNATAKA** **Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd**

## Christians Offer Special Prayers at Churches on the Occasion of Christmas

**MANDYA**

The Christmas festival was celebrated with devotion and religious fervour by the Christian community in Mandya, with special prayers held at churches across the city. As part of the celebrations, believers came together to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ and spread the message of peace, love and brotherhood.

At the Sadesmaraka Church in Mandya city, members of the Christian community assembled in large numbers to offer prayers on the occasion of Christmas. The church premises were filled with hymns and prayers as devotees sought blessings and reflected on the teachings of Christ. The atmosphere was marked by devotion, unity and festive spirit.Similarly, Christians also gathered at the New Life Fellowship Church located on Chiranahalli Road in Mandya city. Special prayer services were organised at the church, where believers participated enthusiastically in worship as part of the Christmas celebrations. The church was decorated to mark the festival, adding to the spiritual ambience of the occasion. During the prayers, pastors and church leaders spoke about the significance of Christmas, emphasising values such as compassion, forgiveness and service to humanity. Devotees prayed for peace, harmony and well-being of society, highlighting the universal message of Christmas.

Families, elders and youth alike participated in the services, greeting one another and sharing the joy of the festival. The celebrations were conducted peacefully, reflecting the spirit of communal harmony in the city.

The Christmas prayers in Mandya once again showcased the city's rich tradition of religious coexistence, with the Christian community celebrating their festival in an atmosphere of devotion, joy and mutual respect.

Government of Karnataka)
(Urban Development Department)
**Vijayapura City Corporation, Vijayapura, Central Office**
**Bagalkot Road Jalanagar - 586109**
**Website:https://vijayapuracity.mrc.gov.in E-mail:itstaff_ulb_bijapur@yahoo.co.in**

ನಂ.ಮನಪಾವಿ:/ಕೇ.ಕಂ/ಪವಿ/2025-26/4393 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 24.12.2025

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**

Vijayapura Municipal Corporation Invites tenders from interested and eligible contractors for the following works related to Solid Waste Management under the 15th Finance Commission Grant for the year 2025-26 and ABC Activities. Interested contractors/NGOs are requested to submit their proposals through the KPPP portal by the specified date.

| Sl. No | Fund | Name of Work | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 15th F C 2025-26 | Procurement of Truck Mounted 5 Cubic Meter Capacity Sweeping Machine, DMA/2025-26/IND5735 | Rs. 110.00 Lakhs |
| 2 | | Procurement Hydraulic Crawler Exacavator DMA/2025-26/IND5737 | Rs. 52.00 Lakhs |
| 3 | General Fund | Animal Birth Control and Anti Rabies Vaccination of Stray Dogs programme in City Corporation Vijayapura (DMA/2025-26/SE6288/CALL-2) | Rs. 82.50 Lakhs |

* Tender Published date: 26.12.2025
* Last date for Submission of tender : As per KPPP Portal
* Technical Bid Opening Date: As per KPPP Portal
* Financial Bid Opening Date: As per KPPP Portal
* For more details, please visit the https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in or contract the Assistant Executive Engineer (Environment) during office hours.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer (SWM)**
**Vijayaura City Corporation, Vijayapura.**

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/570/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025-26

## QUICK READ

### Policeman shoots himself dead in Chhattisgarh

**Raipur**

In a tragic incident, a constable posted at the Kodnar security camp under Kohkameta police station in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district, allegedly died by suicide on Thursday. The constable, on duty in this Naxal-affected Bastar region, shot himself with his service rifle, sustaining a severe head injury, police officials said. He was immediately rushed to the district hospital in Narayanpur for emergency treatment. However, due to excessive bleeding, he succumbed before receiving medical attention, they said. Preliminary police investigations indicate that health-related issues may have contributed to the extreme step, the officials further said.

### Child mistakes crude bomb for ball, injured in explosion

**Kolkata**

A child was seriously injured in a crude bomb explosion after he mistook it for a ball, said the police on Thursday. The incident occurred in the Basanti area in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district late. The child has been brought to Kolkata and admitted to a hospital where he is receiving treatment. His condition is said to be serious. The police have launched an investigation to find out the source of the bomb and how it was left in the area. According to the police, the incident occurred in the Kharimachhan area under the Amjhara Gram Panchayat area of Basanti block. Local residents said the child was playing inside an abandoned house when suddenly, the sound of an explosion was heard.

# ED conducts searches 5 states in digital arrest fraud case

## Enforcement Directorate widens nationwide crackdown after cyber fraudsters digitally arrested industrialist S.P. Oswal, siphoning crores

**CHANDIGARH**

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Jalandhar Zonal Office, has intensified its action against cyber-enabled financial crimes by conducting extensive search operations across five Indian states in connection with a high-profile digital arrest money laundering case. The searches, carried out on December 22, spanned 11 locations across Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Assam, marking a significant escalation in the probe linked to eminent Ludhiana-based industrialist S.P. Oswal.

According to an official statement released on Thursday, the searches were conducted under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. During the coordinated operations, ED officials recovered and seized several incriminating documents, electronic records and digital devices believed to contain crucial evidence related to the laundering of proceeds of crime.

The investigation was initiated following a First Information Report (FIR) registered by the Cyber Crime Police Station in Ludhiana under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. As the probe progressed, the ED expanded its scope by clubbing nine additional FIRs registered by various police authorities. These cases were linked to similar cybercrime and so-called digital arrest frauds allegedly perpetrated by the same criminal network.

The ED revealed that fraudsters impersonated officers of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and used forged official and judicial documents to intimidate and digitally arrest S.P. Oswal. Through coercion and deception, the accused forced the industrialist to transfer Rs 7 crore into multiple bank accounts controlled by the syndicate. Of this amount, investigators have successfully traced, recovered and restored Rs 5.24 crore.

However, the remaining funds were allegedly laundered through a complex web of mule accounts held in the names of individuals such as labourers and delivery personnel. The agency noted that these accounts were used to rapidly withdraw cash or further divert funds to obscure the money trail.

# Union govt launches five digital reforms

**NEW DELHI**

Centre unveils five technology-driven governance reforms to enhance transparency, efficiency and citizen-centric public service delivery nationwide

The Union government on Thursday launched five major digital governance reforms aimed at strengthening transparency, accountability and citizen-focused administration across the country. The initiatives were unveiled by Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), during the National Workshop on Good Governance Practices 2025 held in the national capital.

The five reforms — the Ex-Servicemen Reservation Compendium, AI Recruitment Tool, e-HRMS 2.0 App, iGOT AI Platforms, and Karmayogi Digital Learning Lab 2.0 — are designed to modernise administrative processes, improve service delivery and equip civil servants with future-ready skills. Addressing the gathering on the occasion of Good Governance Day, observed annually on December 25, Dr Singh emphasised that governance is a continuous responsibility rather than a theoretical concept.

Good governance is not an abstract ideal, but a daily administrative responsibility rooted in transparency, accountability, and citizen-centric delivery, the Minister said. He highlighted that Good Governance Day carries special importance as it marks the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who institutionalised probity in public life and laid a strong foundation for people-first governance.

Dr Singh noted that while the principles of good governance were articulated earlier, their effective implementation gained momentum after 2014 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said the government has been guided by the mantra of Minimum Government, Maximum Governance, focusing on leveraging technology to simplify systems and reduce administrative burdens.

Explaining the newly launched initiatives, the Minister said the Compendium of Guidelines on Reservation for Ex-Servicemen consolidates all existing instructions into a single, updated and user-friendly reference document. This move aims to ensure clarity, uniformity and timely delivery of reservation benefits for ex-servicemen while reducing ambiguities and implementation errors across ministries and departments.

# Indore's AB Road renamed after Atal Bihari Vajpayee

**INDORE**

On the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Indore Municipal Corporation has named the city's vital AB Road as Atal Bihari Marg, paying tribute to the revered leader's legacy. The decision was taken during a meeting of the Municipal Corporation's Council and announced as part of celebrations marking Vajpayee's birth centenary, observed nationwide as Good Governance Day. The road, previously known for its Bus Rapid Transit System corridor and commonly referred to as BRTS, serves as a lifeline connecting key areas of Indore, stretching from Rau to Mangaliya through densely populated localities. Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava shared the announcement on his X handle, stating that the renaming honours Vajpayee's immense contributions to the nation, his visionary ideas, and his selfless dedicated services.

*Security forces eliminated Maoist commander Ganesh Uike in Odisha encounter, dealing a major blow to insurgent leadership*

# Maoist leader Ganesh Uike killed in major anti-Naxal operation

**BUBANESHWAR**

In a significant breakthrough in India's fight against Left-Wing Extremism, dreaded Maoist commander Ganesh Uike, a central committee member of the banned CPI (Maoist), was killed in a major anti-Naxal operation in Odisha, police officials confirmed on Thursday. Uike was carrying a bounty of Rs one crore and was considered among the most wanted Maoist leaders in the country.

The encounter took place in the dense Rampa forest area along the Kandhamal–Ganjam district border, where a joint security force team comprising Odisha Police's Special Operations Group (SOG), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Border Security Force (BSF) launched a coordinated operation based on specific intelligence inputs.

According to officials, Uike was gunned down during an exchange of fire with the security personnel.

Ganesh Uike had been active in the Maoist movement for nearly four decades and played a critical role in shaping the outfit's armed strategy. A native of Nalgonda district in Telangana, he rose through the ranks to become a central committee member a few years ago, underscoring his strategic importance within the organisation. Within Maoist circles, he was known by the alias P. Hanumanta.

Uike was the mastermind behind the 2013 Jhiram Ghati massacre in Chhattisgarh, one of the deadliest Maoist attacks in recent history, in which several senior Congress leaders lost their lives. He was also linked to multiple high-profile Maoist strikes across various states, making him a key target for security agencies.

For the past three years, Uike had been operating in Odisha's Kandhamal region, where he focused on coordinating guerrilla activities, mobilising cadres and strengthening Maoist networks in forested and remote areas. Security officials said his presence had posed a serious challenge to counter-insurgency operations in the region.

# Days before SIR hearing process, BLO goes missing

**KOLKATA**

A Booth Level Officer (BLO) has gone missing in West Bengal's East Midnapore district before the start of the hearing process of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, said the police on Thursday.

According to his family members, he has been untraceable for the past two days. The BLO's identity card is at his home, along with various enumeration forms and related documents. The disappearance of the BLO before the public hearing of the SIR process has caused a stir in the area.

The district administration has also launched efforts to find the missing BLO.

# SUDARSAN PATTNAIK ON HIS NEW WORLD RECORD

**PURI**

Renowned international sand artist and Padma Shri awardee Sudarsan Pattnaik successfully created a new world record on Thursday with a spectacular sand art installation titled World's Biggest Apple and Sand Installation of Santa Claus at Niladri Beach in Puri, Odisha. The record-breaking artwork was created on the occasion of Christmas using nearly 1.5 tonnes of apples and sand, and was formally recognised by the World Records Book of India on December 24. The monumental installation stands as a unique blend of creativity, sustainability and festive spirit, drawing widespread attention from visitors and art enthusiasts. Measuring an impressive 60 feet in length, 22 feet in height and 45 feet in width, the installation showcases Santa Claus holding a globe, symbolising global peace and harmony. The artwork highlights Pattnaik's distinctive style of conveying social messages through sand art, while celebrating the joy and spirit of Christmas. The ambitious project was executed under the leadership of Sudarsan Pattnaik with the active participation of 30 students from his Sand Art Institute.

# Delhi CM Rekha Gupta inaugurates 45 'Atal Canteens'

**NEW DELHI**

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday inaugurated 45 out of the proposed 100 'Atal Canteens' in the national capital on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The initiative aims to provide affordable and nutritious meals to people at highly subsidised rates. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, BJP leaders Ashish Sood and Tarvinder Singh Marwah, who were seen having food at the Atal Canteen to mark the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta paid tribute to Atal Bihari Vajpayee, calling him a yug purush who was born 100 years ago. She said that as the 101st birth anniversary approached, the government deliberated on how best to honour his legacy, which led to the decision to launch the Atal Canteens.

The CM further said that the resolution to open Atal Canteens was deliberately taken on this significant day.

Today, 45 out of the proposed 100 Atal Canteens have been inaugurated, with Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurating them virtually. The remaining canteens will be opened after the completion of necessary work, the Chief Minister said.

Explaining the scheme, Gupta said that people will be able to eat meals at the canteens for just Rs 5. She clarified that while the cost to the consumer is Rs 5, the actual value of the meal is around Rs 30, with the government bearing a subsidy of Rs 25. The Delhi government is starting the facility of providing meals at just Rs 5 from today, she said, adding that the first meal slip was taken by Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, followed by her.

Inspired by the vision of service, good governance, and poor welfare of the Honorable Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji, this initiative will ensure that Delhi becomes such a capital where food is received with dignity and no one has to go to bed hungry, she later wrote on her X handle.

# Function held to mark Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birth anniversary

**PATNA**

The birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna awardee Atal Bihari Vajpayee was observed across the country with reverence and solemnity. In Bihar, a state-level function was organised at Patliputra Park in Patna to commemorate the occasion. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar paid heartfelt tributes to the late leader by garlanding his statue. Several senior leaders, ministers, legislators and representatives from social organisations gathered to honour Vajpayee's enduring legacy.

## SU DO KU

### Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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Solutions to Wednesday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE REFORMS

# *HM Shah lays foundation for 1,655 industrial units*

**GWALIOR**

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah delivered an inspiring address at the 'Abhyudaya Madhya Pradesh Growth Summit' here on Thursday, marking the 101st birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna recipient Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Speaking on the theme 'Investment to Employment – Atal's Resolve, a Bright Madhya Pradesh', HM Shah hailed the state's rapid transformation under the double-engine government, declaring that Madhya Pradesh is emerging as the growth engine of 'Viksit Bharat'.

HM Shah lavished praise on Chief Minister Mohan Yadav for pioneering initiatives aimed at balanced regional development across the state.

He highlighted CM Yadav's innovative approach of organising regional investment promotion events and ground-breaking ceremonies in every division, ensuring equitable growth and unlocking the untapped potential of all areas.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has taken thoughtful steps to establish a strong foundation for all-round development through his regional investment committees, he said, adding that these efforts surpass even the energetic pace set by previous long-serving BJP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

The Home Minister emphasised the critical importance of symmetrical industrial establishment to leverage Madhya Pradesh's strategic geographical location.

He pointed to the traditional strength of cotton production in the Malwa and Gwalior-Chambal regions, noting that declining farmer incomes due to unfair prices could be reversed by setting up processing and allied industries locally. This would minimise transportation costs, make cotton farming profitable again, and connect seamlessly to markets in Delhi, western states, and nearby districts.

HM Shah described the day's massive investment push – with foundation stones laid for 1,655 industrial units worth over Rs 2 lakh crore, expected to create 193,000 jobs – as a fitting tribute to former Prime Minister Vajpayee's vision of good governance and national progress.

## QUICK READ

### Polish jets intercept Russian reconnaissance aircraft

**Warsaw**

Poland's military said its fighter jets intercepted and escorted a Russian reconnaissance aircraft flying close to Polish airspace over the Baltic Sea. The incident occurred on Thursday morning as the plane was operating near Poland's border but within international waters. NATO's eastern flank has remained highly alert following earlier Russian airspace violations, including a September incident when three Russian jets entered Estonian airspace and drones crossed into Poland. The Polish army also reported detecting unidentified objects entering from Belarus overnight, later assessing them as likely smuggling balloons drifting with the wind.

### China accuses US of trying to thwart improved China-India ties

**Beijing**

China on Thursday accused the United States of misrepresenting its defence policy to obstruct improving relations between Beijing and New Delhi. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said China views its relationship with India from a strategic and long-term perspective. He stressed that the border dispute remains an issue strictly between China and India, adding that Beijing opposes any external country commenting on or interfering in the matter. Lin was responding to a question on whether China might use the recent easing of border tensions to influence India's ties with the US.

# Five killed after rescue helicopter crashes on Mount Kilimanjaro

Five people died when a rescue helicopter crashed near Mount Kilimanjaro's Barafu Camp, Tanzanian authorities confirmed on Thursday

**DODOMA**

Five people were killed when a helicopter crashed on Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro, the country's civil aviation authority confirmed on Thursday. The crash occurred on Wednesday near the Barafu Camp area of the mountain, which is used as a base point by climbers attempting to reach the summit.

According to a statement from the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority, investigations are underway to determine the exact cause of the accident. Local media, including Mwananchi newspaper and East

Africa TV, reported that the helicopter had been on a medical rescue mission at the time of the crash.

Kilimanjaro regional police chief Simon Maigwa told local outlets that among the victims were the pilot, a medical doctor, a mountain guide, and two foreign tourists. However, authorities did not immediately release the nationalities of the deceased.

Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain at nearly 6,000 metres (about 20,000 feet) above sea level, attracts roughly 50,000 climbers each year. The crash reportedly happened between 4,670 and 4,700 metres, an altitude where rescue operations are especially challenging due to thin air, strong winds, and rugged terrain.

Authorities have extended condolences to the families of the victims and said more details would be shared once the investigation progresses.

# Tarique Rahman returns to Bangladesh after 17 years

**BNP chief Tarique Rahman returns to Dhaka after 17 years in exile, igniting party support amid unrest and high-stakes February elections ahead**

**DHAKA**

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) acting chairman Tarique Rahman returned to Dhaka on Thursday after more than 17 years in self-exile, receiving a massive public welcome that is expected to boost his party ahead of the February 12 parliamentary elections. Rahman, 60, is the elder son of ailing former prime minister Khaleda Zia and has emerged as a strong contender for the prime minister's post, especially as the Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami party is trying to mount a serious challenge to the BNP in the polls. His homecoming takes place amid renewed political unrest following the killing of youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi, a key figure in last year's protests that led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government. With the Awami League barred from contesting under the country's Anti-Terrorism Act, BNP is currently viewed as the frontrunner. Rahman arrived with his wife Zubaida and daughter Zaima and was received at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by senior BNP leaders, including Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, under tight security. He later thanked interim government

chief Muhammad Yunus for ensuring his safe return. The BNP leader is expected to visit his critically ill mother at Evercare Hospital. Security in Dhaka has been significantly tightened, with thousands of army, BGB, and police personnel deployed. Drone use and photography near key locations have been restricted. Rahman later travelled in a bulletproof bus to attend a massive reception where tens of thousands awaited him.

His return also comes at a time when Bangladesh-India relations are under strain, further complicated by unrest following Hadi's death and rising anti-India sentiment in parts of Bangladesh.

## Pope Leo condemns Gaza suffering in first Christmas sermon

**VATICAN CITY**

In his first Christmas sermon as head of the Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIV used the solemn occasion at St. Peter's Basilica to speak out strongly about the humanitarian suffering in Gaza. Departing from his usually restrained and diplomatic tone, the first U.S.-born pope highlighted the plight of Palestinians who have been living in harsh conditions for weeks, exposed to cold, wind, and rain. Reflecting on the nativity story, he said Jesus' humble birth symbolized God choosing to dwell among the vulnerable, urging the world not to ignore those enduring hardship today.

Elected in May to succeed the late Pope Francis, Leo has repeatedly voiced concern over Gaza's humanitarian crisis. He recently stressed that any lasting resolution between Israel and the Palestinians must involve the creation of a Palestinian state. Although Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire in October after prolonged conflict, international aid groups report that humanitarian support remains severely inadequate, with most of Gaza's population displaced.

During the Mass attended by thousands, the pope broadened his appeal, lamenting the suffering of homeless people worldwide and the devastation caused by continuing wars. He spoke of the fragility of civilian lives shattered by conflict and criticized the burden placed on young soldiers forced into battle, often questioning the truths behind the causes they are expected to die for. Later in the day, Pope Leo is scheduled to deliver his traditional "Urbi et Orbi" blessing, where he is expected to once again focus on global crises and peace.

## ICE agents involved in Maryland shooting, two injured

**WASHINGTON**

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents were involved in a shooting in Glen Burnie, Maryland, that left one man with gunshot wounds and another with minor injuries, authorities said. The Department of Homeland Security said ICE officers were attempting to apprehend two men in the country illegally when the driver rammed a van into law enforcement vehicles and then accelerated toward agents. Officers responded by firing their service weapons, striking the driver.

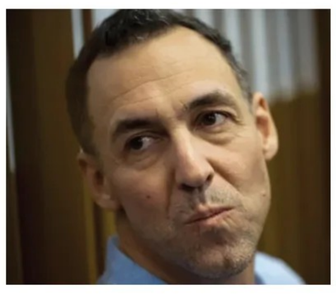
## Russia made a proposal to France on jailed French researcher

**MOSCOW**

Russia has said it has submitted a proposal to France concerning Laurent Vinatier, the French researcher jailed for violating Russia's foreign agent laws, and is now waiting for Paris to respond. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed on Thursday that communication had taken place between the two countries and that Moscow had presented an offer, stating that "the ball is in France's court."

Vinatier was sentenced in 2024 to three years in prison for failing to register under Russia's "foreign agent" regulations, which require individuals and organisations deemed linked to foreign interests to meet strict legal obligations. He now also faces additional espionage-related charges.

France has strongly rejected



Russia's actions, calling Vinatier's detention arbitrary and demanding his release. President Emmanuel Macron has insisted that Vinatier had no connection to the French state and accused Moscow of using the case as part of a misinformation campaign.

Russian President Vladimir Putin previously said he would review the matter, while Paris continues to push diplomatically for Vinatier's freedom as tensions over the case persist between the two nations.

# BUSINESS

# India will soon be self-reliant in semiconductor sector: HM

Amit Shah said India entered semiconductors late but strongly, predicting self-reliance and exports while praising Madhya Pradesh's investment potential greatly

**BHOPAL**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that although India joined the global semiconductor industry later than many nations, it has made a powerful entry and will soon achieve self-reliance while also becoming an exporter. Speaking at the 'Abhyudaya Madhya Pradesh Growth Summit' in Bhopal, Shah expressed confidence that India will rapidly establish a strong presence in chip manufacturing and contribute significantly to the global supply chain.

Highlighting Madhya Pradesh's potential, Shah said the state's strategic location and fertile land make it highly attractive for investment, claiming that even modest investments could yield huge financial returns. During the summit, he inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for industrial projects worth ₹2 lakh crore, marking the 101st birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Paying tribute to Vajpayee, Shah remembered him as an eloquent leader, compassionate poet, and a statesman de-

voted to public welfare who maintained goodwill across political lines. He also paid homage to Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya on his birth anniversary and C Rajagopalachari on his death anniversary.

Shah noted that Madhya Pradesh, once seen as lagging in power infrastructure, now has surplus electricity. He also praised the state's achievements in cleanliness, saying it has surpassed the rest of the country in sanitation efforts.

On this occasion, he inaugurated the Gwalior Fair and dedicated the renovated Atal Museum to the public. Officials said around 25,000 beneficiaries, along with thousands of entrepreneurs and investors, attended the summit. The new industrial projects are expected to generate nearly 1.93 lakh employment opportunities in the state.

## India overhauls tax regime in 2025, new I-T Act from April 1

**NEW DELHI**

India revamped its tax system in 2025 with major reforms in both indirect and direct taxes, aimed at boosting consumption and simplifying compliance. The new simplified Income Tax Act, 2025, will come into effect from April 1, replacing the over six-decade-old Income Tax Act, 1961. Alongside, two new levies—additional excise duty on cigarettes and a cess on pan masala—will be implemented on dates announced by the government.

On the indirect tax front, GST rates were cut on around 375 goods and services from September 22, compressing the four-tier structure of 5, 12, 18, and 28 percent into two main slabs of 5 and 18 percent, while

retaining a 40 percent levy for sin goods. The overhaul aimed to rationalise the tax system, reduce litigation, and make it simpler and more predictable. Despite the cuts, GST collections remain robust, though November recorded a year-low of Rs 1.70 lakh crore, reflecting the full impact of rate reductions.

For direct taxes, the government raised the income tax exemption limit, with no tax payable on annual income up to Rs 12 lakh under the new regime, which offers lower rates without deductions. The new slab structure ranges from 5 percent on income of Rs 4-8 lakh to 30 percent on income above Rs 24 lakh.

With GST and income tax reforms largely in place, policymakers are now focusing on customs duty rationalisation, procedural simplification, and end-to-end digitalisation of processes to enhance trade facilitation, improve transparency, and attract investment. Future reforms may also include one-time amnesty schemes to resolve legacy disputes and reduce litigation.

## Coupang confirms former employee saved data of 3K customers

**NEW DELHI**

E-commerce giant Coupang on Thursday clarified that a former employee accessed customer data but only saved information from about 3,000 accounts, with no evidence of any external transfer, according to a company press release. The individual, identified through forensic investigation, admitted to accessing basic customer details from approximately 33 million accounts using stolen security keys, but only a fraction of the data was saved and later deleted. Coupang's internal probe confirmed that sensitive information such as payment details, login credentials, or customs clearance numbers were not compromised.

## 'India engaged with US to secure balanced trade pact'

**NEW YORK**

India remains actively engaged with the United States to establish a mutually beneficial and balanced trade arrangement as soon as possible, India's Ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, said. Kwatra noted that discussions with the United States Trade Representative (USTR) have been ongoing throughout the year, aiming to achieve a comprehensive trade agreement that benefits both countries.

Kwatra highlighted that the tone for bilateral engagement was set during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US in February, which resulted in a significant outcome document covering multiple areas, including space cooperation. He described India's successful launch of an American communication satellite by ISRO's LVM3-M6 rocket as a landmark achievement, marking the heaviest commercial satellite ever launched from Indian soil. This success capped a year of notable milestones in US-India civil space cooperation, including the Axiom-4 Mission carrying Indian Air Force Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla to the International Space Station and the operationalization of the ISRO–NASA NISAR mission for advanced Earth observation.

Kwatra said the two nations have collaborated extensively on human spaceflight, spaceflight safety, planetary protection, satellite systems, connectivity, space sustainability, and advanced space manufacturing. Beyond space, India and the US are working closely on trade, science and technology, and artificial intelligence. Kwatra highlighted preparations for the AI Impact Summit to be held in New Delhi on February 19-20, the first such summit in the Global South. He emphasized that technology remains a key pillar of India-US engagement, with continued proactive collaboration across both government and private sectors.

## Himachal condemns Centre's apple import policies

**SHIMLA**

Himachal Pradesh's Congress government on Thursday strongly criticized the Centre's apple import policies, calling them "anti-farmer and anti-horticulture" and harmful to the state's apple growers. The criticism followed the reduction of import duty on New Zealand apples from 50% to 25% under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which Education Minister Rohit Thakur said betrayed local orchardists. He emphasized that apple cultivation is vital for Himachal's hill economy and any policy undermining domestic growers threatens the livelihoods of thousands of families. Thakur also highlighted the discontinuation of the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) funding by the Modi government, reducing the budget from Rs 4,000 crore in 2022-23 to just Rs 1 lakh in 2023-24.

## QUICK READ

### Sun Pharma's Taro recalls 17,664 units of shampoo

**New Delhi**

Sun Pharma's US subsidiary, Taro Pharmaceutical Industries, has recalled over 17,000 units of its Ciclopirox antifungal shampoo due to manufacturing issues, the USFDA reported. The shampoo, used to treat seborrheic dermatitis, failed impurity and degradation specifications, prompting a Class II nationwide recall of 17,664 units initiated on December 9. A Class II recall indicates the product may cause temporary or medically reversible health effects, with minimal risk of serious consequences. Taro, a dermatology-focused company wholly owned by Sun Pharma since last year, produces both prescription and over-the-counter products.

### PMGSY rural roads cross 7.87 Lakh km

**New Delhi**

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), celebrating 25 years in 2025, has achieved a milestone by completing 7,87,520 km of rural roads, nearly 95% of the sanctioned 8,25,114 km. Launched to provide all-weather connectivity to unconnected villages, PMGSY has enhanced agricultural growth, employment, access to education and healthcare, and poverty reduction. Phase IV plans to construct 62,500 km of roads by 2028–29, with a financial outlay of Rs 70,125 crore, targeting 25,000 unconnected habitations. The programme leverages digital platforms like OMMAS and e-MARG for real-time monitoring.

# Dharma Keerthiraj's 25th film Nayana Manohara

The title unveiling and teaser release of 'Nayana Manohara' Film. starring the chocolate boy Dharma Keerthirajs 25th Film. The function was held at the Marriott Apartments in UB City. Bangalore-based young businessman and builder Anush Siddappa is producing the film under his own banner EXQUISITE Entertainments with the desire to contribute something to the Kannada film industry. Priyanka Upendra and Vinod Prabhakar inaugurated the ceremony.

Talent Director Puneeth. KGR is directing his debut film with his own team 'Last Bench Wonders Since 1990', and the meaningful tagline 'This is a beautiful poem that introduces you to me' was special.

The fact that my parents and sister have come has given me strength. Thank you very much for everyone taking the time to come and greet the team. My 25th film can be called a milestone. I will appear in three shades. Vasuki Vaibhav's music is a plus for the film. I acted with Priyanka Madam in 'Virus'. She is a very simple person. My friend Vinod Prabhakar has been supporting me since the beginning., Dharmakeerthiraj said.

As the director says, I cannot say anything right now. I have given a small hint in the poster as well as the teaser about what the film will be like. I will definitely keep up my promise said Punith.KGR. Producer Anush Siddappa, kept it a secret as the guests were engrossed in the program outline, and requested for your blessings.

Speaking on the occasion, Priyanka Upendra said that the film has seen its 100th release and let's celebrate it at this very place. The taste of the producer was seen in the clips. Make a film like the teaser. The Kannada industry is not lacking in anything. First watch a Kannada film. Then pay attention to other languages, he said. Artists like Naveen Shankar, Sindhu Loknath, Mayuri, Anusha Rai, Shishir, Aishwarya Sindoogi, Chandana Ananthakrishna, Siri, Trisha, Telugu Bigg Boss winner Nikhil and others had arrived at a beautiful time. By the time everything ended successfully, the small hand of the clock had crossed ten.

# Romantic Journey music video song

Arjun Kishore Chandra, who was not only the hero of the film 'Life 360' but also directed it, had later flown abroad in search of a job. Even there, his mind kept wrinting scripts etc., He would do something in his free time. The reward for that is that he has written the story, lyrics and action cuts for a five-minute nusic video song called 'Pranaya Payana' and appeared in the lead role. Senior businessman Rajashekhar.S of Bengaluru, who has been supporting his efforts since the beginning, has invested under Sri Sai Gagan Productions. The tagline 'Loving & Travelling' is meaning full.

Ashwini PuneethRajkumar, who watched the song just the other day, was impressed and decided to release it through her own PRK Audio company, and called the director and producer to his office to praise them.

Talking about the song, I was curious about how blind people perceives smell and how they feels touch. The director explains that the song was made to convey this. Regardless of the physical disability, he will tell how a person who has a dream in life can achieve it without worrying. In addition, scenes have been captured in beautiful places there to convey how good Ireland is.

Theater actress Edel Ashling is the heroine. Arjun plays the supporing role. Music is by Ajesh.MC, cinematography by Turlough Kennedy, screenplay by Sripad Joshi, vocals by Siddharth Belmannu, editing by Advik-Vinodh, colorist Anilkumar.K. The video song can be watched on PRK YouTube from this Saturday.

# Sukhibava under the Ved Aryan banner

The title that makes the mind happy is the producer of the film Sukhibava, a couple Santosh Kumar-Bhargavi Santosh. Robert film Producer Umapathy Srinivas Gowda is friend. His inspiration and well-wisher, he took the courage to invest under the banner of his son name, Ved Aryan Films. His grandfather had produced Telugu films in the 80s. A scion of the same line age, Santosh Kumar completed his education in London and then invested in Kannada cinema out of his admiration for the language. Mysore-born N.K. Rajesh Naidu, who had been an assistant to many, including Director Yogaraj Bhat, wrote the story, screenplay, dialogues and directed the movide.

Actor Sharan, who always encourages newcomers, has given his best wishes for this movie as well, as he has sung the song 'Beda Maccha Beda' on the 'Enne' song, which has given strength to the team. The movie has a family story and the director has said that he will give more details in the future.

Mahendraa from Bangalore is the hero. Sushmitha Nayak and Viyanshi Hegde are the heroines. The rest of the cast includes Gaurav Shetty, Shobharaj, Ravi Shankar Gowda, Sunil Puranik, Tukalisanthu, Maithri Jaggi etc. Music is by B.J. Bharat-Shubham, cinematography is by Manjunath Nayak. As the first stage of promotion, the team has shared some information for the Christmas festival.

# Diddy files appeal asking for immediate release from prison

Rap mogul Sean Diddy Combs has filed an appeal requesting the immediate release from his 50-month prison sentence, which he claims was excessively harsh in his federal trial. The 84-page appeal, submitted on December 24, 2025, challenges the court's decision and argues that the sentence handed down by Judge Aran Subramanian was beyond the typical range for similar offences, according to Variety. Combs' attorney, Alexandra AE Shapiro, argues that the 50-month sentence was unfair, asserting that Judge Subramanian effectively acted as the thirteenth juror, defying the jury's verdict and imposing a harsher punishment. The appeal criticises the judge for claiming that Combs coerced, exploited, and forced his former girlfriends into sex, which contradicts the jury's decision. It also highlights that defendants in similar cases typically face sentences of less than 15 months, even when coercion is involved, which was not established in Combs' case. Combs, who was convicted on two counts of transportation to engage in prostitution, was acquitted of the more serious charges of racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking.

# Mark Ruffalo, Ethan Hawke to lead live reading of novel 'All the President's Men'

Mark Ruffalo and Ethan Hawke will lead a one-night live reading of 'All the President's Men' in Los Angeles, reported The Hollywood Reporter. The reading, a benefit for the Stella Adler Academy of Acting & Theatre, is scheduled for January 9 at the Harmony Gold Theatre. The evening will also honour the legacy of Robert Redford, who starred in the Academy Award-nominated film. In addition to Ruffalo and Hawke, the reading cast will include Michael John Benzaia, Don Cheadle, Spencer Garrett, Charlotte Larsen, Tim McNeil, Rob Morrow, John Jack Rodgers, Christopher Thornton and Missy Yager, reported The Hollywood Reporter. William Goldman wrote the Oscar-winning screenplay for the 1976 film, which is based on the book by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. Set during the Nixon presidency, the script follows two journalists, Woodward and Bernstein, as they investigate and ultimately expose the Watergate scandal. Redford, who passed away in September, costarred with Dustin Hoffman in the film, reported The Hollywood Reporter. Decades later, the work remains urgently relevant, underscoring the essential role of a free press in a healthy democracy, the event notes read as quoted by The Hollywood Reporter. In addition to its reputation as a famed acting school, the Stella Adler Academy has created an Action/Outreach Program that brings arts education to underserved communities, offers free public performances and provides scholarships to acting students, with almost half of the student body receiving some form of financial assistance.

# Channing Tatum pays tribute to late actor James Ransone

Channing Tatum is mourning the loss of his dear friend and former co-star, James Ransone, who died by suicide on December 19. The 45-year-old actor took to Instagram Stories to share a heartfelt tribute, remembering Ransone as one of the realest, reported People. The tribute featured a photo of the two actors taken on Tatum's 30th birthday in 2010. Ransone and Tatum starred together in the 2011 film The Son of No One, where Tatum portrayed a police officer in New York City harbouring a dark childhood secret. In his caption, Tatum wrote on December 24 , There ain't words for these things. But you my friend... was one of the realest. I remember being in every conversation with you and just always being like I wonder what he's gonna say.!!??? Lololol.

# Salman Khan brings playful vibes, teases Shera at Arbaaz Khan's anniversary bash

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan was seen turning heads at brother Arbaaz Khan and Shhura Khan's wedding anniversary party, bringing his trademark charm to the family celebration. The intimate gathering, which was attended by close friends and family members, became even more lively with Salman's playful camaraderie with his longtime bodyguard, Shera. While posing for the media, the actor was seen teasing Shera in good humour, sharing laughs that clearly reflected their strong bond built over the years.

In the clip going viral on social media, as Salman posed for the media with Shera standing right beside him, the actor

quickly took the opportunity to tease him for his poses. For the party, Salman chose an all-black attire, including black jeans and a plain t-shirt. Meanwhile, family members, including Salim Khan, Salma Khan, Arhaan Khan, Sohail Khan, Nirvan Khan, and Alvira Agnihotri, among others, were in attendance for Arbaaz and Shhura's anniversary.

# Anil Kapoor celebrates a quiet birthday with longtime friend Anupam Kher, family

Actor Anil Kapoor marked his birthday with an intimate celebration this year, made even more special with the presence of his longtime friend and fellow actor Anupam Kher.

Taking to his Instagram handle, Anupam Kher shared a video from the celebrations where he joined Kapoor and his wife, Sunita Kapoor, for a delightful evening. In the clip, Anil Kapoor could be seen cutting his birthday cake with much joy, while others, including Kher and Sunita, clapped and sang a birthday song for him. A few other guests also appeared to be present at the bash. In his caption, Kher wrote, With the #BirthdayBoy and his Lady #SunitaKapoor. A quiet celebration at a quiet place! #HappyBirthdayKapoorSaab @anilskapoor @kapoor.sunita. As the video concludes, Kher could be seen teasing his friend, calling him a child actor, before Kapoor playfully fed him a piece of cake.

**City Hilights (English Daily) published by P. Sunil Kumar (Publisher) on behalf of Immaculate Broadcasting Consortium World News (P) Ltd.,** No. 18, JRV Court, Queens's Road, Bengaluru – 560001 and printed at Manipal Media Network Limited Opp. Govt School, Kempalinganahalli, Near Kunigal Cross, Nelamangala TQ, Bangalore Rural Dist. -562123, Printed at No-7/2 plot no.CA-3/1,28(p)&29(p) Kapanoor 2nd Stage Industrial Area Kapnoor Village Kalaburagi -585104. Printed at S. J. R. V. Printers, No. 208 Plot No. B-019 KSSIDC Industrial Area, Irfan Ahamed Khan Pathan, 4th Main Road Gamanagatti, Hubballi-Dharwad – 580025. and Elegant Offset Printers Pvt. Ltd. No. 5-61/1, Shed No. M-6, Yeyyadi Industrial Estate, Yeyyadi, Mangalore - 575 008. (RNI No: KARENG / 2015 / 63243), Regd. No. BGGPO-2581/2017-2019 Posted at Bengaluru PSO-560026 Email - cityhilights.news@gmail.com Phone: 080-41209042. Copyright. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is prohibited.